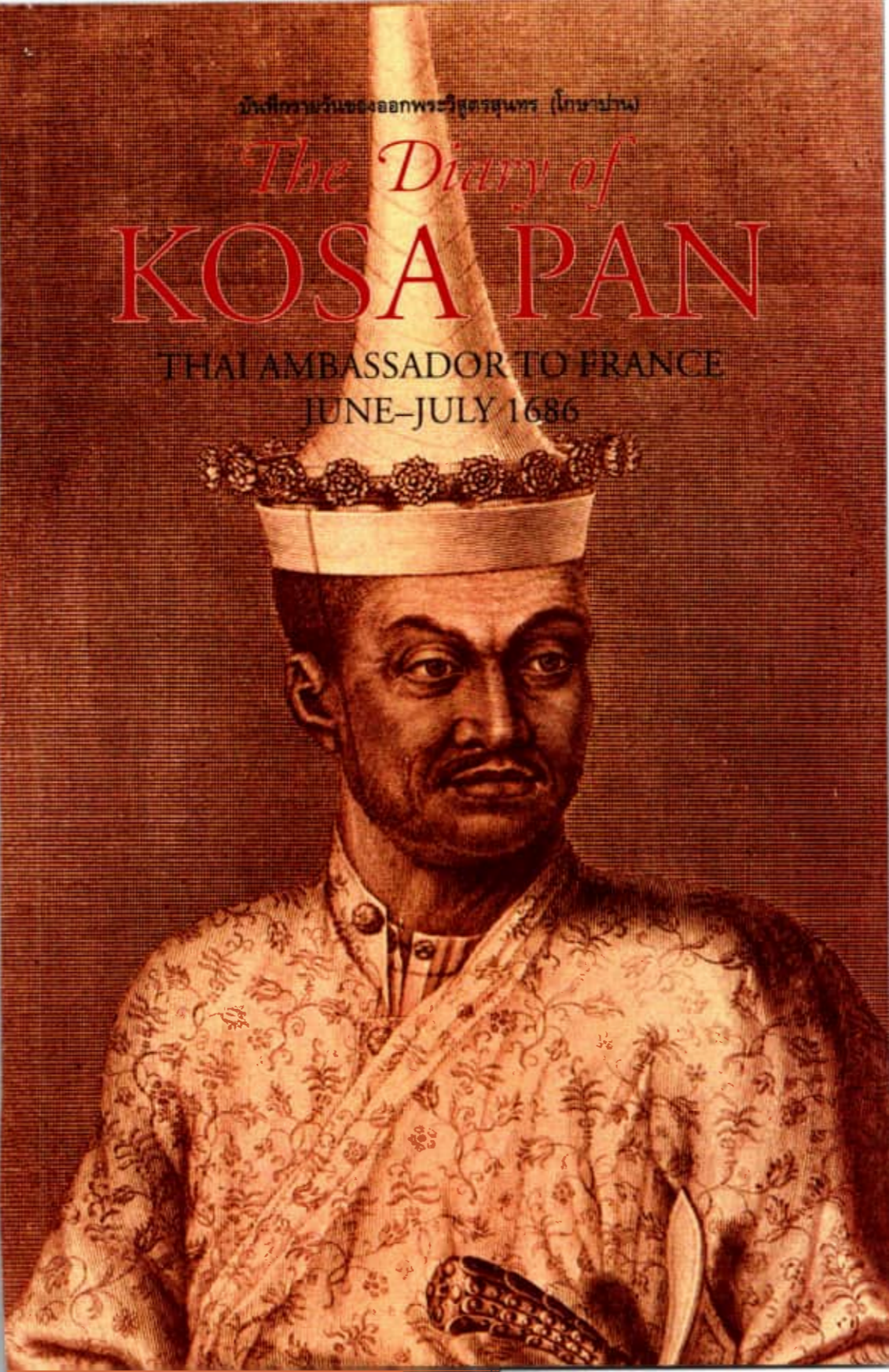


บันทึกการพบกันของเอกอัครราชทูตสยาม (โกษาปาน)

The Diary of
KOSA PAN

THAI AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE
JUNE-JULY 1686



THE DIARY OF KOSA PAN
(OK-PHRA WISUT SUNTHON)
THAI AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE
JUNE–JULY 1686

บันทึกประจำวันของออกพระวิสุตรสุนทร (โกษาปาน)

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TRANSLATION OF THE DIARY
VISUDH BUSYAKUL

EDITING OF THE TEXT
TRANSLATION OF THE INTRODUCTION AND
FOOTNOTES
MICHAEL SMITHIES

SILKWORM BOOKS

บันทึกกรายวันของออกพระวิสุตรสุนทร (โกษาปาน)
ราชทูตสยาม ราชสำนักสมเด็จพระนารายณ์มหาราช กรุงศรีอยุธยา
เมื่อวันพฤหัสบดี ขึ้น ๑ ถึง วันพฤหัสบดี ขึ้น ๑๕ ค่ำ เดือน ๘ ปีชวด จุลศักราช ๑๐๔๘
พุทธศักราช ๒๒๒๔ ระหว่างพักอยู่ที่เมืองแบรสส์ ประเทศฝรั่งเศส
ถ่ายทอดเป็นอักษรไทยปัจจุบัน โดย ก้องแก้ว วีระประจักษ์ กรมศิลปากร พ.ศ. ๒๕๒๗
แปลจากภาษาไทยเป็นภาษาอังกฤษโดย ศาสตราจารย์เกียรติคุณวิสุทธิ บุญกุล

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ISBN 974-7551-58-6

First published in 2002 by
Silkworm Books
104/5 Chiang Mai-Hot Road, M. 7, Chiang Mai 50200, Thailand
E-mail: silkworm@loxinfo.co.th

Set in 11.5 pt. Garamond by Silk Type

Printed by O.S. Printing House, Bangkok

To His Excellency Mr Jacques Rummelhardt,
former French ambassador to Thailand,
this diary
of Ok-phra Wisut Sunthon, alias Kosa Pan,
former Thai ambassador to France

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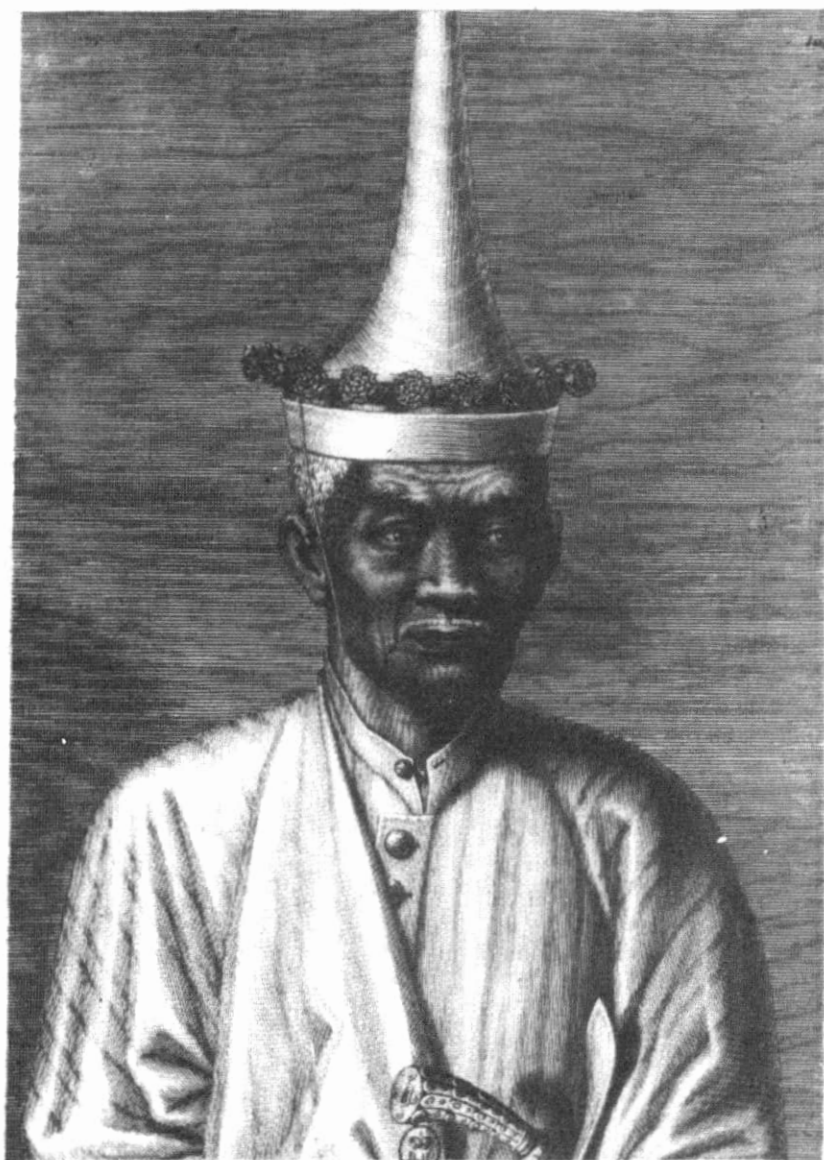
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lan oc pra-Visud dont torre. Au ja tuc
roy de Siam en France. le bruit éclatant des
sur tout le monde. et sa Majesté Siamoise
au aduis a creu estre obligée de donner des
t a choisir ce Ministre comme une personne
complément a sa Majesté tres Chrestienne. l
des plus considerables des Indes. Il s'embarqua a la barre de Siam en 1685 arriva a Paris et fit so
ntree celebre le 12 d'oct. 1686. et a été reçu agreablement du Roy et de toute la Cour. Il est
de naissance illustre frere du d'ant Barcalon premier Ministre de sa Majesté Siamoise.

Ambassadeur extraordinaire du serenissime
fameux Conquerant du Roy Siamois repand
qui est aux extremités de l'univers en ayant
marques publiques de la jaye quelle en aue
dont le merite est distingué pour sa Majesté
ayant charge de presens pour sa Majesté
Siamoise.

Ok-khun Wisut Sunthon, better known as Kosa Pan, first ambassador to France, 1686, in a contemporary engraving by J. Hainzelman.



Jan oc-Lung Kanlaya-Raja-Maitri Oppatut.
La Royauté ayant publié de toutes ses bouches
iques de Louis le grand Roy de France et toutes
Monarchie de L'Asie a voulu faire connoître
a sa Majesté très Chrétienne la part quelle prenoit
bagade solennelle des trois plus considérables
second qui a porté la parole à sa Majesté avec tant de grâce et de prié qu'il en a reçu la plus
sement général. Il eut avec ses compagnons son audience publique à Versailles le 1^{er} Septembre 1686

Ok-luang Kanlaya Ratchamaitri, second ambassador to France, 1686, in a contemporary engraving by J. Hainzelman.



*Tan oc-Cun Sryi Sarauacha tritua
en France, a été choisy par ce Prince
pour faire ses complimens a Sa Majesté
actions dont le bruit a été porté jusques
tratté d'alliance entre les deux nations, et
les Puissances qui s'agrandissent par trop dans les Indes. Il salua le Roy a Versailles le 1.
Septembre 1686 et se pliqua en des termes et des manieres sy engageans quil y a lieu d'ez-
perer pour luy que Sa Majesté luy accordera toutes ses demandes.*

*Un des ambassadeurs du Roy de Siam
pour son trois^e ambassadeur en France
tres Chretienne sur le fait de ses grandes
aux extrémités de l'Asie, pour établir un
obtenir par ce moyen du Secours contre*

Ok-khun Siwisan Wacha, third ambassador to France, 1686, in a contemporary engraving by J. Hainzelman.



A mythical representation of the audience of the Siamese ambassadors with Louis XIV (here shown as Hercules or Apollo) on 1 September 1686.



Contemporary oil painting by Jacque Vigoureux Duplessis of the three Siamese ambassadors in Paris. The priest to the right is either their interpreter, the Abbé de Lionne, or the Jesuit, Guy Tachard.

THE TRAVELS IN FRANCE OF THE SIAMESE AMBASSADORS, 1686

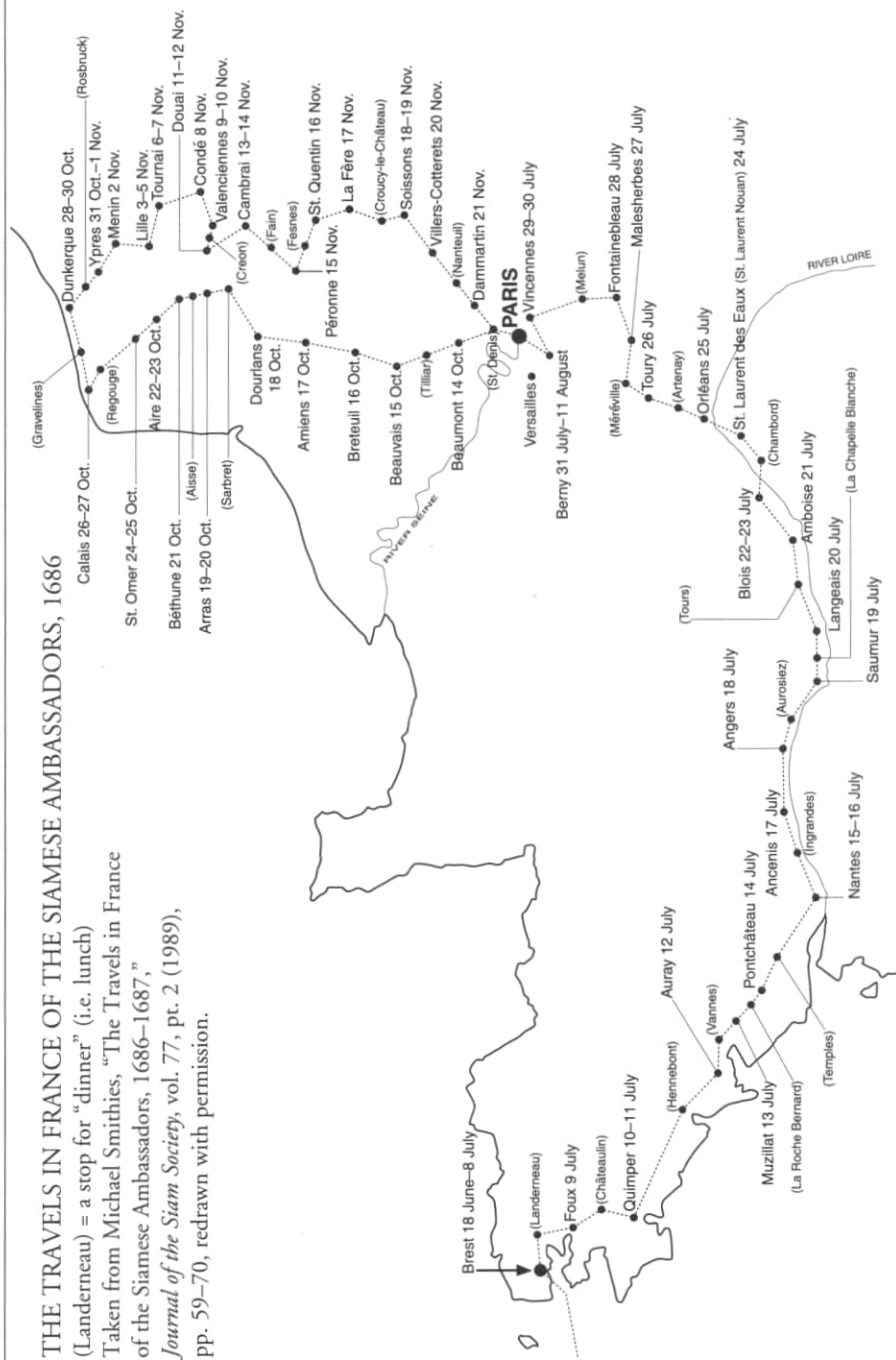
(Landerneau) = a stop for "dinner" (i.e. lunch)

Taken from Michael Smithies, "The Travels in France

of the Siamese Ambassadors, 1686-1687,"

Journal of the Siam Society, vol. 77, pt. 2 (1989),

pp. 59-70, redrawn with permission.



INTRODUCTION

1. EMBASSIES, INSTRUCTIONS, AND WRITTEN ACCOUNTS

The history of the embassies sent by the kings of Siam to Western sovereigns really only starts at the beginning of the seventeenth century. Hardly had they become established in Pattani than the Dutch sent in June 1604 Cornelis Speckx to Ayutthaya, where he was well received by King Naresuan, who died in April 1605. King Ekathotsarot, brother and successor of Phra Naresuan, sent in 1606 some *khunnang* (mandarins) to Pattani, bearing presents destined for Prince Maurice of Orange-Nassau. The Dutch had these mandarins sent to their godown in Bantam (Banten) in West Java, from where the presents were sent to Holland.

The establishment in 1608 of a godown of the VOC (the Dutch East Indies Company) in Ayutthaya alarmed the Portuguese who had settled in Siam since the 1520s. They denigrated the Dutch by every means, in particular pretending that they were a nation of marauding pirates with no fixed abode who roamed the high seas. These allegations had quite the opposite effect, since they inspired Phra Ekathotsarot with the desire of sending ambassadors to the "king" of this strange and enterprising people. No one bothered to explain to him that Holland was in fact a republic (the United Provinces) in which the legislative power was exercised by the States General and the executive by the prince stadtholder of the Orange-Nassau family.

A Siamese delegation consisting of two ambassadors and a dozen secretaries and servants arrived in December 1607 at Bantam. Uncertain what to do, the Dutch admitted the two envoys (the elder was named "Conchi") on board the flagship of their returning fleet and gave them as an interpreter Evert Dircksz, a young Dutchman who had lived six years in Siam "to learn the language".

Conchi and his colleague arrived in September 1608 at The Hague, where they prostrated themselves before Prince Maurice of Orange-Nassau and presented him on behalf of Phra Ekathotsarot a letter written on a rolled sheet of gold enclosed in an ivory case, and presents (damascened arms and two heavy rings studded with precious stones). The letter expressed the desire of the King of Siam to establish friendly relations with the "King of Holland".

The two envoys embarked at the beginning of 1610 on the fleet transporting Pieter Both, the first VOC governor-general, who was to establish the capital of the Dutch Indies at Batavia (Jakarta). It is not known if the Siamese ambassadors died during the return journey or if they disappeared into the wilds when they arrived in Java. Their conduct had given rise to reproaches (they were suspected of having stolen diamonds), and perhaps they feared the very strict punishments of their king, who had mandarins who had perpetrated infinitely less serious crimes slowly fried in large cauldrons. Whatever the case, they were never seen again in Ayutthaya.¹

This rather disappointing beginning to diplomatic relations between Siam and the West did not in the least discourage the successors of Phra Ekathotsarot. Other embassies were sent to Portugal and France before the end of the seventeenth century. The two following missions had even less auspicious endings than the first.

The establishment of French missionaries in Siam in the 1660s and the solemn presentation in 1673 by Bishops Pallu, Lambert de La Motte and Lancau of letters from Pope Clement IX and the French king Louis XIV inspired Phra Narai with the desire to send ambassadors to Europe. He hoped that closer links with the crowns of Portugal and France would consolidate the position of Siam in relation to the enterprising VOC, whose power offended him. But as the Dutch controlled the sea routes passing the Cape of Good Hope it was necessary to wait until the end of the Franco-Dutch War (1672–1678) before being able to implement this project.

1. For details concerning this first Siamese embassy to Europe, see the articles by Paul Pelliot, "Les relations du Siam et de la Hollande en 1608", and J. L. L. Duyvendak, "The first Siamese embassy to Holland", in *T'oung Pao*, vol. 32 (1936), pp. 223–229 and 285–292. For a detailed account of this embassy, see Dirk Van der Cruysse, *Siam and the West, 1500–1700*, Chiang Mai, Silkworm Books, 2001, chapter 3.

In December 1680, the French ship the *Vautour*, in which André Boureau-Deslandes had travelled to size up the Siamese market for the French 'Royal Company of the East Indies', left Siam for Bantam. He carried on board three ambassadors whom Phra Narai was sending to the court of France and to the pope in Rome. They were Ok-phra Phiphat Kosa, Ok-luang Siwisan, and Ok-khun Nakhon Wichai. Two priests from the Missions Etrangères de Paris (the French Foreign Missions), who had worked several years in Siam, went with them as interpreters. Their suite comprised some twenty secretaries and valets. They bore letters engraved on gold leaf to Louis XIV and the pope. Fifty cases of presents and two young elephants were embarked on the *Vautour*, which anchored in Bantam in January 1681. The embassy had to wait seven months at the French godown in Bantam before going on board the *Soleil d'Orient*, which was to transport the Siamese to France. It left Bantam in August 1681, put in at Mauritius in November, and was never seen again by anyone. It was thought that the doomed ship, the pride of the French Company, put into Fort Dauphin, and was shipwrecked between Madagascar and the Cape.²

This disaster, news about which only reached Siam in September 1683, did not discourage Phra Narai in his policy of opening to the West. He listened in the meantime to the advice of his Greek favourite, Constantin Phaulkon, who had arrived in Siam in 1678 and had rapidly risen to high positions.

Two diplomatic initiatives were taken at the beginning of 1684. At the end of January, a mini-embassy, consisting of the *khunnang* Khun Phichai Walit and Khun Phichit Maitri, embarked on an English vessel. The mandarins were accompanied by the missionary Bénigne Vacher, who acted as their cicerone and interpreter. Their mission consisted in obtaining in Versailles information concerning the shipwreck of the *Soleil d'Orient*, and offering some presents to the Ministers of the Navy and Foreign Affairs. The journey was without incident, and the Siamese, the first to set foot on French soil, made a very conspicuous entry into Paris in October 1684.

The two *khunnang*, very ill at ease in the middle of the crowds they drew, and little interested in the country in which they were

2. See chapter 12 of *Siam and the West* which is entirely devoted to this unfortunate embassy.

representing their king, remained shut up in the Hôtel des Ambassadeurs. This infuriated Bénigne Vacher, who meanwhile informed the ministers of Louis XIV of the favourable dispositions of Phra Narai. An embassy from the King of France to the King of Siam would obtain important privileges for the French missionaries who were trying in vain to convert the Siamese, and for the French East Indies Company which was trading in Siam. In his enthusiasm, Vacher let it be understood that Phra Narai might even embrace Christianity if Louis XIV invited him to do so.

The Minister for the Navy, Seignelay, was impressed, and transmitted this information to Louis XIV; the sending of a French embassy to Siam was decided upon. Two of the king's vessels, the *Oiseau* and the *Maligne*, were to transport, in addition to Vacher and his two *khunnang*, the ambassador Alexander de Chaumont, his adjutant the Abbé de Choisy, two priests from the French Foreign Missions, six astronomer Jesuits loaded with scientific instruments, a dozen young gentlemen who were naval officers and would constitute the ambassador's suite, and six specialized workmen who were to enter the King of Siam's service.

For his part, Phra Narai did not limit himself to the mini-embassy which had left Siam for France in January 1684. Two months later, another embassy, comprising three ambassadors, six *khunnang*, three half-caste Portuguese interpreters and dozens of servants left Ayutthaya and embarked on a Siamese frigate commanded by a Portuguese captain bound for Goa, the capital of the Portuguese Indies, where the delegation was to board a Portuguese vessel for Lisbon.

Documents providing details about this embassy suggest that, while Portugal was the principal destination of the diplomatic mission, Phra Narai was also contacting other European sovereigns. The Jesuit, Guy Tachard, who wrote down the souvenirs of Ok-khun Chamnan Chai-chong, one of the six *khunnang*, notes that one of the interpreters "was destined to go to France with two mandarins who were to take to His Most Christian Majesty a present from the king [of Siam]." A report dated December 1686 from the governor-general of the VOC Johan Camphuys to the directors of the VOC in Holland indicates that the three ambassadors were sent to "the kings of France, England, and Portugal."³ The mention of England in this context is surprising.

3. Guy Tachard, *Second voyage du Père Tachard et des Jésuites envoyés par le*

This embassy is of particular interest to us for two reasons. First of all, it ended in very dramatic circumstances related in detail by Fr Tachard.⁴ Secondly, a French translation of the instructions given to the three ambassadors is preserved in Paris.⁵

This text, the only one of its kind, gives precious information about the spirit behind the diplomatic activity of the reign of Phra Narai. The instructions, the end of which is missing, are conceived as a questionnaire in thirty-five articles, of the kind: "if you are asked such a question, reply that . . ." Their length varies. Article 3 is the shortest: "If you are asked about the health of the King of Siam, reply that he is well." Article 18 is the longest, filling almost a third of the text. "If you are asked what are the tributary kingdoms of Siam and what are the neighbouring kingdoms, and how many provinces there are, reply that . . ." The long reply, listing hundreds of kingdoms, provinces, and towns, seems to have helped Simon de La Loubère draw up the geographic section appearing in his *Kingdom of Siam* (1691).

Some articles are worth further consideration. It is known that the royal name was so sacred that the Siamese were not supposed to pronounce it, at least so long as the reigning king was alive. In the letter he addressed in 1686 to Louis XIV, Somdet Phra Narai only refers to himself as the "Great King of the Kingdom of Ayutthaya". Article 5 of the instructions reveals his names: "If you are asked the name of the king and how he is addressed, and what is his age, reply that when he was crowned he was called Sommedethia Phra Naareyya Raachaattirat Chaadi Souriauwongsa. After he was crowned, he is called Sommedethia Phra Maahaa Kresatratti Raacha Thian Phou Ya.

Roy au royaume de Siam, Amsterdam, Pierre Mortier, 1689, p. 302. W. Ph. Coolhaas (ed.), *Generale Missiven van Gouverneurs-Generaal en Raden aan Heren XVII der Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie*, vol. V, The Hague, M. Nijhoff, 1975, p. 43.

4. Guy Tachard, op. cit., book VII, pp. 276–333. An English translation of this by Michael Smithies appeared as *A Siamese Embassy lost in Africa: The Odyssey of Ok-khun Chamnan*, Chiang Mai, Silksworm Books, 1999.

5. *Instructions données aux mandarins siamois pour le Portugal [1684]*, Paris, Archives des Missions Étrangères, vol. 854, ff. 721–727. This text was published by Alain Forest in *Les missionnaires français au Tonkin et au Siam (XVIIe–XVIIIe siècles)*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1998, vol. I, pp. 429–435 (annex 2).

But when he writes letters to other kings he assumes another name which includes all his qualities. He is fifty years old." The following article elaborates: "If you are pressed to give and explain the name of the king, say that all the words which constitute it are derived from Pali and are very difficult and that you fear you are unable to render it justice and would therefore err in attempting to do so." Born in 1632 and on the throne since 1656, Phra Narai was fifty-two when the instructions were drawn up. The least one can say is that the transcription of proper Siamese names by the French missionaries of the time is approximate.⁶

Article 15 is concerned with the spread of Siamese diplomacy. "If you are asked whither the King of Siam sends ambassadors, reply that formerly he sent and received embassies from China, Japan, Persia, Ava, and Laos. At present, the embassies to Japan, Ava, and Laos are suspended. Recently an embassy has been sent to France whence the ambassadors have not yet returned. War is being waged against Ava and Laos. As for Japan, embassies are very rarely sent there, though ships go there every year." So Siam only maintained diplomatic relations with the China of Kang-xi, and Safavid Persia of Shah Sulaiman. One can understand better the policy of opening to the West which Phra Narai pursued.

Let us return to the three Siamese ambassadors who, armed with these instructions, together with a letter composed on gold leaf to Dom Pedro II of Portugal and rich presents, embarked in March 1684 for Goa. The aim of their mission is clearly stated in article 19 of the instructions: "If you are asked why the King of Siam is sending ambassadors to Portugal, what he desires, and if he has need of something, reply that he is only sending you in order to establish a firm and stable friendship between the two crowns of Portugal and Siam; that they have [i.e. that you have] the model of some items which the king desires to obtain." It was therefore as much a shopping trip as a diplomatic mission.

According to the not always coherent indications supplied by Guy Tachard, the three ambassadors and their suite only arrived in Goa in August–September 1684, thus after a journey of six months. The annual Portuguese fleet had already set sail and they had to wait more than a year in Goa, with their board and keep provided by the viceroy Francisco de Távora. They were unaware that during their stay it was

6. This transcription has been retained, except that *pp* is replaced by *ph*.

decided to abandon Velha Goa which was rife with malaria, and a new capital, Nova Goa, would be built nearer the mouth of the Mandovi River. Ok-khun Chamnan, who spend his time visiting with his colleagues the numerous palaces, churches, and monasteries of the old city, was naively surprised that there was a finer city in the world than Ayutthaya.

The Siamese were finally able to embark on the Portuguese vessel *Nossa Senhora dos Milagros* which carried thirty cannons, a crew of 150 men, and some sixty passengers. They set sail on 27 January 1686, and everything went smoothly until 27 April, when about midnight the vessel ran aground in a heavy swell on the rocks of Cabo Agulhas, the most southerly point of Africa located some 200 km to the east of the Cape. Most of the passengers and the crew were able to reach land, but the vessel was a wreck, and its cargo a write-off. Neither drinking water, wine, nor ship's biscuits could be saved.

Then began the painful trek on foot in the direction of the Cape by the demoralized men weakened by hunger and thirst. After a few days, the Portuguese separated themselves from the Siamese, promising to send them help. The Siamese trudged on, feeding on mussels, snakes, insects, wild grasses, and sometimes even the leather on their shoes. Being unable to keep up with his companions, the first ambassador, thinking the Cape was at hand, ordered the party to continue without him and send him a horse or a cart. Some servants remained with him. Some days later, the second ambassador made them promise to take care of the letter of Phra Narai should he die, and to make sure that it was always placed higher than their heads and treated with as much respect as the king himself. They met with Hottentots (the Khoikhoi) who refused to give them food, except for tobacco which of course they did not have. The gold buttons which Ok-khun Chamnan removed from his clothes only brought him a bowl of milk.

Finally, after thirty days of walking, privation, and suffering, they saw the silhouette on a hilltop of two Dutchmen and two Hottentots sent to find them. The Portuguese survivors had reached the Cape and indicated to the Dutch the presence of the Siamese in the area. They arrived, more dead than alive and much reduced in number, at the Dutch fort where the governor, Simon van der Stel, treated the two ambassadors with all the marks of respect their rank demanded. They implored him to send help speedily to the first ambassador, but the southern hemisphere autumnal rains delayed any attempt at rescue.

After three months of care and rest, the survivors of the *Nossa Senhora dos Milagros* set sail on Dutch vessels anchored in Table Bay. The Portuguese reached Amsterdam and from there Lisbon. The Siamese obtained a passage on the *Sint-Martensdijk* which set sail for Batavia. They embarked at the beginning of September 1686, and dropped anchor beneath the fort of Batavia in November.

In his annual report, already cited, of 13 December of 1686, the governor-general Camphuys explained, when speaking of the King of Siam: "As his three ambassadors sent to the kings of France, England, and Portugal left at the beginning of this year from Goa on the Portuguese vessel *Nossa Senhora dos Milagros* and were shipwrecked off Cabo Agulhas, and as one of them had died, the two remaining accepted to depart from the Cape of Good Hope for Batavia on Company vessels, with the request that His Majesty would let us know his pleasure, whether these unfortunate envoys should return to Siam [Ayutthaya], or whether they should continue their journey to Europe." Two months later, Camphuys indicated in a letter to the Heren XVII, the directors of the VOC in Amsterdam, the fate of the unfortunate first ambassador: "Also arrived here in the yacht *Sint-Martensdijk* the ambassadors of Siam, with the exception of the first, who, sought out by our people, was found massacred and dispossessed along with all his attendants, excepting only one." The document also indicates that the aid supplied by the Dutch to the Siamese came to the considerable sum of 5,227 guilders, to be reimbursed by the King of Siam.⁷

After six months spent in Batavia, the survivors of the Siamese mission to Portugal embarked for Ayutthaya, where they arrived in September 1687 after an absence of three and a half years. For sure, the outcome of Siamese diplomatic activity in Europe was not brilliant, but important events had occurred during the absence of the shipwrecked embassy of *Nossa Senhora dos Milagros*.

The ambassadors sent by Louis XIV to Phra Narai had left Brest in March 1685 and after a crossing of only six months reached the bar of Siam. They were received in solemn audience in the palace at Ayutthaya in October, and left Siam at the end of 1685. Those wishing to know the details of the embassy can refer to chapters 16 and 17 of our *Siam and the West*. In order to consolidate the new-

7. W. Ph. Coolhaas, op. cit. (1975), pp. 43 (13 Dec. 1686) and 91 (28 Feb. 1687).

found Franco-Siamese friendship and to thank Louis XIV for his sumptuous presents, Phra Narai decided to send him an embassy at least as brilliant bearing a letter on a sheet of gold and innumerable bales of presents. It made the journey on board the *Oiseau* and the *Maligne* which brought the ambassadors Chaumont and Choisy back to France. They were flanked by the scheming Jesuit, Guy Tachard, who was the tool of Phaulkon, then all-powerful at the court of Siam.

Not wishing to repeat the mistake of 1684 when the mediocre Phichai Walit and Phichit Maitri, whose uncomely appearance and uncouth behaviour had caused so much offence on the mini-embassy sent to France, this time the flower of Siamese diplomatic personnel was selected.

The *ratchathut* or first ambassador, Ok-phra Wisut Sunthon, better known as Kosa Pan, was the younger brother of the *phra khlang* (the minister in charge of the royal stores, ports, and relations with foreigners) Kosa Thibodi, who had died in 1683. Kosa Pan had worked fifteen years in the department of his brother, from which one can deduce that he was at least thirty-five when he was sent to France.⁸ It was thought that the two brothers had had the same wet-nurse as the king and thus enjoyed particular prestige. Kosa Pan was the first Siamese who came to pay his respects to the ambassador Chaumont when he arrived at the bar of Siam. The envoy wrote: "he seemed to me an upright person, free from all affectation and reservedness, which made me tell Mr Constance that he would be a very fit man to be sent as ambassador to France." Kosa Pan, who apparently owed his appointment to the Chevalier de Chaumont, is the author of the journal constituting the centrepiece of the present work.

The second ambassador, the *uppathut* Ok-luang Kanlaya Ratchamaitri, was an old hand among Siamese diplomats. He had taken part in several missions to China, and Phra Narai wished to know if the court at Versailles could bear comparison with that at Beijing. The *trithut* or third ambassador, Ok-khun Siwisan Wacha, was at thirty the youngest of the three. He was the son of the unfortunate first ambassador who was to be shipwrecked on the *Nossa Senhora dos Milagros* and subsequently massacred by the natives while

8. See Georges Coedès, "Siamese documents of the seventeenth century. Archives of the Ministry of the Colonies, Paris", in *Journal of the Siam Society*, XIV-2 (1921), 11.

his son was travelling to France. The young diplomat had already been sent as ambassador to the court of the Great Mogul, Aurangzeb. The attendants of the three ambassadors were numerous: eight *khunnang* (the journal of Kosa Pan gives the names of some), some *khunmun* (mandarins of lower rank serving as secretaries), servants, and twelve young Siamese who were to study the French language, as well as the arts and crafts of the country. The missionaries Bénigne Vachet and Artus de Lionne, both having lived some time in Siam and speaking the language fluently, were to serve as interpreters to the ambassadors.

But let us consider first of all, before turning to the Siamese embassy to France, the mania at the Siamese court of writing down everything which occurred, because this was to become evident throughout this embassy, and it is on this account that we have the journal of Kosa Pan. Independent observers were struck by the permanent presence of scribes who noted day and night the least acts and words of the sovereign, and who unceasingly and carefully filled whole books with their records.

The French bishop Louis Laneau noted in 1680, after a long discussion he had with Phra Narai about astronomy, geography, and mathematics: "Three mandarins wrote down the whole of this conversation, and they came close to being punished for not having been able to follow the whole discourse, because, when they presented the king with what they had written down, he said they had turned everything upside down."⁹

Five years later, the Persian ambassador Ibn Muhammad Ibrahim, sent by Shah Sulaiman to the court of Siam, wrote in his account, *The Ship of Sulaiman*: "Another Siamese practice pertaining to the king is that day or night several scribes are on hand to record every detail of the king's conversations, whom he addresses, and exactly what is said in reply. It does not matter how trivial the talk may be, it is meticulously recorded. The scribes also keep record of whatever service a person rendered to the king. Even if it is only a question of the king drinking water, they record who brought him his drink."¹⁰

9. Laneau confided his observations to André Boureau-Deslandes who noted them in a report to the French East Indies Company drawn up in 1680. Paris, Archives of the Foreign Missions, vol. 856, p. 10.

10. Ibn Muhammad Ibrahim, *The Ship of Sulaiman*, translated from the Persian by John O'Kane. London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972, pp. 148-149.

If Phra Narai had his least conversations recorded (what a pity those with Phaulkon were not preserved), how much more did he wish, through the laboriously compiled and detailed accounts of his ambassadors and *khunnang*, to have as complete an idea as possible of the court and kingdom of his "dear friend" Louis XIV.

Precise instructions must have been given to enjoin the ambassadors to note or have noted everything, to omit nothing, and constantly to compare their observations and impressions. During the six months of the voyage on the *Oiseau*, Kosa Pan and his colleagues prepared themselves for their task by bombarding the French with questions about the ship and France itself, carefully noting down the replies. Chaumont, the French envoy, observed in his published account: "They write down the smallest matters they see; I imagine they will be much occupied in France, where they will encounter so many things worthy of their admiration; neither do I doubt but they will give a true account of them to the king their master."¹¹ For his part, the Abbé de Choisy noted in his journal during their return: "These [ambassadors] always have their writing-tablets in their hands, and if you ask them four questions, they ask you six."¹² Kosa Pan and his colleagues therefore arrived in France well prepared, their writing instruments ready to note all the marvels of the court and the kingdom of Louis the Great.

On 18 June 1686 the *Oiseau* and the *Maligne* dropped anchor in the Brittany port of Brest, after a voyage without serious incidents, apart from the death of a *khunnang* on 30 May on board the *Maligne*. The journal of Kosa Pan which has come down to us, and which is the object of the present publication, begins on 20 June. The *Mercure Galant* of Donneau de Visé, the most important French gazette of the period, relates in detail the acts and gestures of the ambassadors and "mandarins" (*khunnang* and *khunmun*). From the beginning of their stay in France, the Siamese mania for writing everything down struck their French hosts.

11. Alexandre de Chaumont, *Relation de l'ambassade de Mr le Chevalier de Chaumont à la cour du roi de Siam*, Paris, Seneuze and Horthemels, 1686, p. 205. The English edition of 1687 is reproduced in Chevalier de Chaumont and Abbé de Choisy, *Aspects of the Embassy to Siam, 1685*, edited and in part translated by Michael Smithies, Chiang Mai, Silkwood Books, 1997, p. 126.

12. François-Timoléon de Choisy, *Journal of a Voyage to Siam, 1685-1686*, translated and introduced by Michael Smithies, Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1992, p. 272 (9 May 1686).

Hardly had they disembarked at Brest than they visited three vessels of the French royal navy at anchor in the port. The *Mercure Galant* relates: "They visited them with such attention that is almost unbelievable. They took the dimensions of the three vessels and wrote down everything concerning them. They do the same for everything they see, and shut themselves up every night after supper with several secretaries. They read to each other what they have observed, some being able to remember something which the others might have forgotten; thus they compile each day an exact journal of what they have seen."¹³ A suspicious person might accuse them of industrial espionage.

The curiosity of the Siamese had no limits. The *Mercure Galant* continued its account by saying that the ambassadors sent their mandarins to visit nearby châteaux in Brittany, and meticulous descriptions of them were drawn up, even going so far as to count the trees bordering the paths in the surrounding parks. The gazette in the same volume also indicates that "not only did they draw up memoranda every evening of what they had seen in the day, but there is even a mandarin with them who writes up their journey in Siamese verse." A recently discovered folded black Thai manuscript in *Nirat* verse (Paris, National Library, Oriental Manuscripts, Indochinois 317) seems to go back to the 1680s, and could be one of these versified accounts.

It can be deduced from the texts that the Siamese, during their visits, noted their observations on thick black paper (Choisy's "writing-tablets"), before comparing and recopying them in the evening on white paper. This black paper is probably the *nangsu kloi*, described by David Wyatt thus: "The bark is stripped from the *kloi* tree, beaten, soaked in a lime solution, and spread out in flat sheets to dry in the sun. The product of this process is a soft, tan-colored paper, which may be used in this condition with a piece of charcoal serving as a pencil. Usually, however, the paper is coated with lacquer or a charcoal paste, which makes it stiff, heavy, and black. It can then be written upon with chalk, a yellow ink made from gambodge, or, in rare instances, gold."¹⁴ Mr Storf, ordered by Louis XIV to accompany the Siamese ambassadors in their visit to cities in the north of the

13. *Mercure Galant*, September 1686, vol. II, pp. 27-28.

14. David K. Wyatt and Constance M. Wilson, "Thai historical materials in Bangkok", in *Asian Studies*, XXV-1 (1965), 109.

country which had recently been conquered by the French, related to the minister Seignelay that the Siamese were unhappy not to be able to describe everything that was shown to them, and all the festivities given in their honour. He added: "And even if they could do so, their supply of black paper would not be sufficient."¹⁵ It is certain that the members of the Siamese mission filled thousands of pages so as to satisfy the insatiable curiosity of their king.

The progress of the Siamese embassy in France is very well documented. Readers are invited to peruse chapter 18 of our *Siam and the West* for a detailed account of the arrival at Brest, the journey through Brittany and the Loire valley to Paris, the solemn audience at Versailles on 1 September 1686 with the presentation to Louis XIV of the letter and presents from Phra Narai, the visits to all the interesting places in the capital and the Paris region, then to the towns in the north, the preparation of a new French embassy, the farewell audience of 14 January 1687, and finally the departure of a squadron of five vessels which was to bring the ambassadors back home, and also to take to Siam the envoys La Loubère and Céberet, together with a French expeditionary corps which would occupy the forts of Bangkok and Mergui. The dramatic unravelling of Franco-Siamese relations at the end of the seventeenth century is again the subject of chapters 19 and 20 of *Siam and the West*.

Dazzled by the glory of Louis XIV and by all they had seen in France, the ambassadors were very moved when they went on their knees before the throne on the day of their farewell audience. Kosa Pan ended his address saying: "For us, Great King, overwhelmed . . . at the sight of your profound wisdom and of all the miracles of your reign, our life seems too short, and the whole world too small, to publish what we think about it. Our memory will be taxed to retain so many things. That is why we have gathered with avidity in faithful registers all that we could observe, and we shall finish them with this protestation, that though we say much, still much has escaped us. These memoirs will be preserved for posterity and placed in safety among the most rare and most precious monuments of State. The King our Master will send them as presents to the princes his allies; and in that way the whole Orient will soon know, and all the

15. Storf to Seignelay, Saint-Omer, 4 November 1686. Cited by E. Gallois, *L'ambassade de Siam au XVII^e siècle*, Paris, Pancoucke, 1862, pp. 112-113.

centuries to come will learn, of the incomparable virtues of Louis the Great."¹⁶

The "faithful registers" were to be harassed by future troubles. Fortunately Kosa Pan's Brest Journal was left behind in France, a small sample of a huge mass which has disappeared forever. We can only imagine what we would have learnt from the complete report of France and the court of Louis XIV seen through Siamese eyes. Comparative social history would have had in these registers a truly unique document.

One can only guess what happened to the numerous detailed accounts which arrived in October 1687 in Siam in the ambassadors' effects. It is likely that Phra Narai, whose health was clearly worsening, had extracts read to him and asked the ambassadors numerous questions, which, with their replies, were duly recorded. Were all these documents lost when, after the palace revolution of 1688 and the death of the Francophile Phra Narai, power devolved to the xenophobic Phra Phetratcha? It would seem not so, since a document in the archives of the Foreign Missions in Paris indicates that, in the reign of Phra Borommakot, the *wang na* (the front palace) burnt down in 1744, and that in the fire a portrait of Kosa Pan, probably painted in France, disappeared, as well as the account of his embassy. The king asked the seminary of the Foreign Missions in Ayutthaya for a copy. The missionaries hunted everywhere for one, and finally located a copy at the residence of an "important court noble". It was transcribed by the palace scribes.¹⁷

This testimony proves that Kosa Pan's promise (that "these memoirs will be preserved for posterity") was kept, at least until the sack of Ayutthaya by the Burmese in April 1767. By the time the ashes of the destroyed capital were cold, the account of Kosa Pan was definitely lost. One can only rejoice that, by mere chance, an important fragment escaped the insensate deprivations of history.

16. *The Discourses at Versailles of the First Siamese Ambassadors to France, 1686-1687*, translated and introduced by Michael Smithies, Bangkok, The Siam Society, 1986, pp. 52-54.

17. Letter from Bishop Jean de Lolière of 26 January 1747, Paris, Archives of the Missions Etrangères, vol. 884, ff. 474-475.

2. VOLUME 1081 IN THE ARCHIVES OF THE MISSIONS ETRANGÈRES IN PARIS

The efforts expended in Siam since the 1660s by the priests of the Missions Etrangères in Paris did not have the anticipated results, since the Siamese piously practising Theravada Buddhism refused to convert to Christianity. In his recent book on the French missionaries in Siam in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Alain Forest does not hesitate to speak of a "total failure"¹⁸.

But the uninterrupted presence of French missionaries in Siam has had the fortunate consequence of a flood of letters and reports sent to the directors of their seminary in Paris. Deposited in the Archives of the Missions Etrangères (AME) in the Rue du Bac, these documents constitute a treasure-trove which has been insufficiently explored by specialists of the history of the kingdom of Ayutthaya. Many thousands of pages in French and Latin and given over to Siam deal, obviously, above all with the work of the missionaries and the disputes in which they became embroiled, but also cover their not always easy relations with the Siamese authorities. Privileged and neutral observers to the passage of Siamese history, the priests of the Foreign Missions have left an irreplaceable mass of on-the-spot accounts.

These documents are as worthy of our attention as the Dutch reports sent by the head of the godown in Ayutthaya to the governor-general of the VOC in Batavia, and transmitted thence to the Heren XVII in Holland, and which are now deposited along with all the VOC archives in the Algemeen Rijksarchief (ARA, State Archives) in The Hague. Even though the justifications for their presence in Siam were totally different (religious on the one hand, commercial on the other), the French missionaries and Dutch merchants open important perspectives on the history of old Siam.

The important instructions given to the Siamese ambassadors sent in 1684 to Goa and Portugal are preserved in a French translation in the Archives in the Rue du Bac, inserted into volume 854. But another document in these archives commands attention in the present instance.

18. The full title of Alain Forest's book is *Les missionnaires français au Tonkin et au Siam (XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles). Analyse d'un relatif succès et d'un total échec*. Paris, L'Harmattan, 1998, 3 vols. The "relative success" refers to Tonkin, the "total failure" to Siam.

At first sight, volume 1081 is nothing out of the ordinary. This tome with an old binding, filled with a delicate seventeenth-century copper-plate hand, bearing on the front page the title *Histoire de Naauan*, with the marginal gloss: "This is one of the generations or rebirth[s] of Sommenacondom." All the French authors of the end of the seventeenth century (Tachard, Choisy, Gervaise, La Loubère, etc.) refer to the Buddha as *Sommonokhodom* or *Sommona Codom*. The word *sommona* apparently refers to a Buddhist monk. *Codom* is a corruption of *Gautama*, the princely name of the historic Buddha (Gautama Siddharta). The *Histoire de Naauan* is therefore a *jataka*, or story of a previous existence of the Sakyamuni Buddha.

The popularity of the *jataka*, which constitute a part of the canonical literature of Buddhism, has never waned. The collection in a Pali version of the accounts of the Buddha himself related to his disciples to emphasize the difficulty of ascending to nirvana (*nibbâna*), comprises no less than 547 "rebirths" or stories in both prose and verse.¹⁹ In Thailand, the ten important accounts of the *Dasa Jataka* (*Tosachat*) correspond to the *Mahânipâta*, the "great section" of the Pali corpus. These edifying stories illustrating the ten cardinal virtues (*pâramitâ*) and in which are included satirical and even licentious elements, enjoyed and continue to enjoy considerable popularity. The innumerable versions of the tenth and last *jataka*, the famous *Vessantara Jataka*, handed down orally in peasant wakes, performed in theatrical adaptations or written down for a literate public, constitute the proof. The mural paintings of temples continue to relate in images the best known *jataka*, whilst paintings on wood or cotton (such as those found in Jim Thompson's collection) allow individuals to decorate their interiors with scenes from the *jataka*.²⁰

More intensive research is needed to determine if the *Histoire de Naauan* which we are dealing with is a canonical or extra-canonical *jataka*. It begins: "There was formerly in the important city of Kuti a rich and powerful king who was known as the great Naokoumoudevaacha. He kept a fine and rich court. He had a large number of mandarins in his suite. He maintained a good number of horsemen

19. The most useful edition is by E. B. Cowell (ed.), *The Jâtaka or Stories of the Buddha's Former Births*, London, 1895, reprinted 1969 (6 vols and an index in three tomes).

20. See Jean Boisselier, *La peinture en Thaïlande*, Fribourg, Office du Livre, 1976, pp. 151-169.

and mahouts. He also had as many as sixteen thousand courtesans. His wife and queen, who was called Pelikaathevi, was extremely beautiful. She also had her court of princesses and others like the king. One of the king's minor wives, called Kantalina, a noted beauty, he loved and considered as highly as the queen . . ." The two women were pregnant, the queen from her husband, but the concubine from "a devil who, after having ended his time in the last and lowest hell called Mahaapethyinvoc, had entered her stomach." As the soothsayers at the court had decided that the two children, who would be born at virtually the same moment, would be male (a prophesy duly noted by the royal scribes), the concubine organized a diabolic intrigue to have the queen's son, Naauan, set aside in favour of her own. Thus the scene was set for a classic confrontation in which, after a series of more or less foreseeable twists and turns, Good finishes by triumphing over Evil.

But it is not the *Histoire de Naauan* which constitutes the interest of volume 1081 in the *Missions Etrangères*. Fr Jean-Paul Lenfant, the previous archivist there, told me some ten years ago that at the beginning of the twentieth-century volume 1081, which had long been of no interest to anyone, fell from its shelf when someone wanted to consult the volume placed next to it. When it was picked up, it was noticed that the *Histoire de Naauan* in French only filled half the volume which had landed upside down. On opening it from the rear, it was clear that the pages were written in seventeenth-century Siamese characters. It was found to be the beginning of a manuscript comprising sixty-eight leaves containing the journal of the first two weeks which Kosa Pan spent in France.

The first question which arises is obviously why Kosa Pan did not take with him this fragment of his journal, knowing that his king wanted to know the most minute details of his voyage and his stay in France. This fragment would have been all the more important in his eyes since it describes with a wealth of detail the honours which Kosa Pan accorded Phra Narai's letter addressed to Louis XIV when it was solemnly transferred from the *Oiseau* to French soil.

When one realizes that the maniacal Siamese scribes used vast quantities of paper during the six-months' crossing to record their impressions of the voyage, it can be supposed that their provision of paper was virtually exhausted on their arrival in France. No doubt the missionaries helped them out whilst waiting for the time when they could renew their stock of paper in Brest. As the volume which

interests us is found in the Archives of the Foreign Missions, the missionary who lent them the notebook in which the *Histoire de Naauan* was written must necessarily have belonged to the Société des Missions Etrangères. It can therefore only be a question of Bénigne Vachet or Artus de Lionne, both of whom were travelling on board the *Oiseau*. It is thought that the author of this translation is Bishop Louis Laneau who had been in Ayutthaya since 1664, and who had studied Pali, convinced that a knowledge of this language was necessary better to understand (and work against) Buddhism. Laneau wrote a Pali grammar and dictionary. The notebook in which the translation of the *jataka* was copied being only half-full, it was lent to Kosa Pan, whose supply of paper was exhausted. In it he wrote the account of his first fortnight in France, and had this recopied by one of his secretaries as soon as their stock of paper was renewed. The notebook was then returned to its owner, who deposited it in the seminary in the Rue du Bac. Once bound, it entered the archives where it was forgotten for two centuries. In this way one can reconstitute the history of volume 1081.

At the time of the discovery of this old Siamese manuscript, the missionaries who had retired to the seminary in the Rue du Bac after many years spent in Thailand were not able to translate the text. They recognized the writing and knew how to transliterate the words here and there, but the Siamese language and writing had evolved too much between the seventeenth and the twentieth centuries for them to be able to produce a complete translation.

Mom Luang Manich Jumsai, a keen visitor to libraries in Paris, learnt of the existence of the journal of Kosa Pan in the early 1980s and obtained a photocopy of it. His Chalermnit Bookstore produced a facsimile edition, in reduced format, on the occasion of the National Book Week in 1984 with the title *The Original Report of Kosa Pan drafted and left in France*. This text went to the National Library in Bangkok to be transcribed into modern written form and published by paleographic specialists. This transliteration was published in January 1985 in the *Silpakorn Journal* with a short introduction by Kongkaew Viraprachaksa. Mrs Kongkaew expressed her desire to see the publication of a translation of the text "so that Thai people and other nationals could evaluate and study the data contained therein for a better understanding of the history of Thailand."

This desire had still not been realized at the beginning of 1990, at the time when I was writing the final chapters of the French version

of *Siam and the West*. Having to describe the stay of Kosa Pan and his colleagues in France, I was extremely anxious to hear the sole Siamese voice in addition to the chorus of French accounts of the embassy.

I set out to find a qualified translator in Bangkok, which was not easy, given the extreme rarity of Thai texts of the seventeenth century. After several contacts which proved dead-ends, I was helped in my quest by Dr Dhiravat na Pombejra of Chulalongkorn University, who put me in touch with the Translation Centre of his university. Professor Emeritus Visudh Busyakul agreed to undertake the translation. This was completed at the end of 1990 and helped me considerably in the writing of chapter 18 of my book which was published in Paris in September 1991.

It would have been unforgivable to have kept this translation of a unique Thai text in the bottom of a drawer. I am delighted that Silkworm Books decided to publish the journal of Kosa Pan as a pendant to *Siam and the West*. These two texts illustrate, each in their fashion, the difficulty, three centuries ago, of two fundamentally different cultures, separated by two oceans and six months' sea voyage, to understand each other. The role played by Kosa Pan in this coming together was, as will be seen, exemplary.

3. THE "BREST JOURNAL" OF KOSA PAN

As Kosa Pan spent his first two weeks in France in the port city of Brest, the fragment of his account which has been preserved could be called the *Brest Journal*. The *Oiseau*, the French vessel on which he had travelled, dropped anchor in this Brittany port on 18 June 1686. The *Journal* of Kosa Pan starts on Thursday 20 June (or more exactly Wednesday 19th) and stops on Thursday 4 July, five days before the departure of the Siamese ambassadors for Paris and Versailles via the Loire valley.

As all the section of the journal of Kosa Pan which has survived takes place at Brest, some details about the town, the port, and the arsenal are called for. The enthusiasm of the *ratchathut*, who visited at length the warships anchored in the roads, the port installations, the stores, the workshops, and the fortifications, is not feigned. After his visit in 1661 to Brittany, Louis XIV never stopped expanding this naval base. A narrow channel separates the immense roadstead from the sea, and protects it from the Atlantic storms and enemy attacks.

These natural advantages made Brest an ideal base for the war fleet the young king dreamed of creating. It is too often forgotten that Brest and its navy cost more than the immense palace of Versailles. The Marquis de Nointel, the successor to the intendant Desclouzeaux who welcomed the Siamese ambassadors in Brest, wrote: "[It is] one of the finest ports in the world, and the one where the king always keeps the greatest number and largest of his ships. The beauty of its roadstead, the value, safety and facilities of the port are well known. The expenditure which the king has made on the armaments and for the ordinary maintenance of the port and vessels, and those of the officers, troops and the sailors stationed there, all put a lot of money into the region."²¹ The visit of Kosa Pan and his party has left some marks even now: the main street of the old town is called *Rue de Siam*.

It will be seen that Kosa Pan had regular contacts in Brest with the Jesuits, members of the influential order to which the redoubtable Fr Tachard belonged. It is relevant to note that Louis XIV had granted the Jesuits one of his houses in Brest in 1686, together with an income of 2,000 *livres*, and that the States of Brittany (the regional government) were going to add to this sum on 9 July (the very day that Kosa Pan and his party left Brest) the sum of 40,000 *livres* for the teaching of mathematics (a very useful science for those preparing a naval career) and the establishment of an naval almoners' seminary.

The reader will note certain striking features of Kosa Pan's text. His refusal to leave the *Oiseau* for good before everything had been arranged for the solemn removal of Phra Narai's letter is striking. This immense respect for his sovereign's letter recalls the attitude of the three Siamese ambassadors shipwrecked on the coasts of southern Africa in the same year 1686, and doing everything possible to treat the royal letter which they bore with all possible respect even in the wretched conditions in which they wended their way towards the Cape.

The efforts of Kosa Pan to assimilate French customs is touching, as is his pride when he thought he had succeeded. Similarly touching is his exemplary courtesy when dealing with his hosts and the numerous curious persons who paid him visits which must often have

21. Cited by Jean Meyer in François Bluche (ed.), *Dictionnaire du Grand Siècle*, Paris, Fayard, 1990, p. 236.

inconvenienced him. His declaration in the first lines of the text to the ladies who had paid him a visit is characteristic in this respect: "You would like to see me; it is exactly the same, as I would like to see you."

The precision with which he wrote describing the furniture of his room, going as far as taking the measurements of the mirror, should not surprise us. A whole page is given over to the description of the bed with its three-metre-high canopy, its curtains and bedcover of crimson silk edged with gold and silver braid, its four mattresses, its pillows, sheets and coverlets with lantern-shaped patterns.

The same concern for precision fills the pages describing the banquet set for seventy-two places offered by the intendant Desclouzeaux. The numerous dishes, often new to Kosa Pan, presented problems. Being unable to use in his own language the words to designate vegetables and fruit unknown in Siam, he turns into Siamese the French words passed to him by the intendant, his neighbour at table. We therefore learn that he was served a-ra-ti-cho (artichauts, artichokes), fried vegetable roots called ka-pe-re-ya (champignons, mushrooms), peas called pra-chau (pois jaunes, yellow peas), and faeu (fèves, broad beans). Among the fruits listed are fre-se (fraises, strawberries), se-ri-sa (cerises, cherries), and pa-ron (prunes, plums).

It is to be wondered if Kosa Pan kept up the same degree of detailed precision throughout the eight months he spent in France. If he did, his entire journal would have covered more than a thousand pages. The sections relating the two formal audiences granted to the Siamese ambassadors by Louis XIV in September 1686 and January 1687 must have been very instructive. One can imagine Kosa Pan describing in detail thousands of things about the Versailles court which struck him but which none of the blasé French courtiers considered worthy of writing down for posterity. Perhaps Phra Narai, after listening carefully to the reading of this journal, knew more about some aspects of Louis XIV's court than modern French specialists.

It can be seen that the beginning of the text is missing, since the first leaf of the manuscript begins in the middle of a sentence. Were one or several leaves lost when the notebook was bound? It is on this account very likely that the first lines of the text which have come down to us (until the words "Those ladies then departed") form part of the end of the entry for 19 June, the day after the arrival of Kosa Pan in Brest. The text continues: "Before noon on Thursday, the first

day of the waxing moon of the eighth month, the commander and a naval officer came to the ship . . ." The complete lunar dating would have been "The first day of the waxing moon of the eighth month, the year of the Tiger and the eighth year of the Chunlasakkarat decade", the date which coincides in the Western Gregorian calendar to 20 June 1686 AD, in that year indeed a Thursday. A brief note on the Thai calendar by the translator appears in an appendix.

In her introduction to the Thai text of Kosa Pan in the *Silpakorn Journal*, Kongkaew Viraprachaksa correctly notes: "With respect to our country, Thailand, the diary is evidence that the Thai people have called themselves 'Thai' from the Ayutthaya period." Indeed, the *ratchathut* refers to Phra Narai as "the King of Siam" or "the King of Ayutthaya" (f. 55), but speaks of the "Thai envoys" (ff. 54, 60, 61), and designates himself as "the Thai ambassador" (f. 62) or as "the ambassador of my Lord the Sovereign of the Thai kingdom" (f. 15).

This is a relevant factor in the old debate about the terms *Siam* and *Thailand*. It is known that Rama IV and Rama V referred to themselves in their letters preferably as "King of Siam", but from the reign of Rama VI (1910–1925), the terms *Siamese* and *Thai* had become interchangeable. If the Thai elite referred to itself in the company of Westerners as *Siamese* and their country as *Siam*, ordinary people called themselves *Thai*. This is confirmed by the Thai-French-English dictionary of Bishop Pallegoix (1856) which translates *Thai* as "free", and mentions in the same entry "the Thai, the Siamese". The article on *Siam* explains that the terms "Siam, the Siamese" are no longer used. That is to say that the name Siam had already been out of date some time before the use of the terms *Thai* and *Thailand* was imposed by the *rattaniyom* (cultural decrees) of Plaek Phibunsongkhram, who became prime minister in 1938. Charnvit Kasetsiri had reason to write recently in *The Nation*: "There is firm evidence that, in the spoken language, the word 'Thai' for the country (with the prefix *muang*) and for the people (with prefix *khon*) has been in use as far back as the seventeenth century."²² Indeed, just a few years after Kosa Pan wrote his diary, the well-informed French envoy La Loubère noted in his *Du Royaume de Siam* (1691): "The

22. Charnvit Kasetsiri, "What's in a nation's name?", in *The Nation* (Focus: Siam-Thai Millennium Section), 21 February 2000, p. C 1.

name of *Siam* is unknown to the Siamese. It is one of those words which the Portuguese in the Indies use . . . The Siamese give to themselves the name of *Thai*, or *Free*, as the word now signifies in their language."²³

Are there still repercussions caused by the missing journal of Kosa Pan? Whatever the case, the following passage of Georges Coedès is worth quoting: "If the narration of the Siamese embassy, which is embodied in the Siamese Official History, *Phongsawadan Krung Kao*, is really grounded on Phra Wisut Sunthon's report to the King, he must have been the greatest boaster of his time. In his extraordinary chapter of the *Phongsawadan*, the Ambassador boasts of having given before the Court at Versailles a kind of magical performance in order to prove the invulnerability of Siamese soldiers, and he pretends having received a French court lady as a gift of King Louis. But it would be unfair to make him responsible for that statement, the redaction of which is probably not anterior to the beginning of the nineteenth century, and which I consider as the echo of some gossip current in Siam about that famous embassy."²⁴

4. THE END OF KOSA PAN

No one better embodied the dream of the impossible unity of France and Siam than Kosa Pan, foster brother of Phra Narai and *phra khlung* to his successor Phra Phetratcha. *Ratchathut* to France, he charmed the French with his witty compliments and his sincere admiration for the France of Louis XIV which he first observed in Brest. Readers of the *Mercure Galant* (which does not mention magical performances or the gift of a court lady) had read his courteous remarks with delight. With a man like Kosa Pan, one had the feeling that the Franco-Siamese edifice was built on solid rock.

But he could not, once returned to Siam, accept the occupation by a French expeditionary force of Bangkok and Mergui, the two Siamese strongholds. Claude Céberet, the French envoy to Siam in 1687, writes in his diary: "Father Tachard told me that he did not

23. English translation, London, 1693, p. 6.

24. Georges Coedès, art. cit., *JSS*, 1921, 12.

think Phra Wisut Sunthorn [Kosa Pan] would favour the settlement of the French in Siam, because he is very much attached to his religion."²⁵

Which does not mean that Kosa Pan was to forget his pleasant stay in France. In December 1687, he escorted Céberet to Tenasserim, where Claude de Forbin, who had spent close on two years in Siam, was waiting for them. Forbin writes in his memoirs: "As soon as [Kosa Pan] perceived me, he ran to me, and his head being full of the magnificence he had seen in France, he told me that I had great cause to wish to return to my own country; that he had seen all my family there, and a great number of my friends, with whom he had talked of me; and after he had extolled the court, and everything which hit his fancy more than ordinary, he added in bad French "La France grand bon, Siam petit bon." (France big good, Siam little good).²⁶

However, disapproving without saying so Phra Narai's over-confident French policy, he came closer to the nationalist faction which formed around Ok-phra Phetratcha, his half-brother according to the *Phongsawadan Krung Kao*. It was therefore normal that the new king grant the *khlang* department to him with the title of Phraya Kosathibodi, and that Kosa Pan loyally served under him. The bad faith of the French, at the moment of the negotiated departure of the garrison from Bangkok in November 1688, seems to have profoundly shocked him.

Dr Engelbert Kaempfer had several meetings with *Phra Khlang* Kosa Pan in 1690, and describes him as follows: "He is a more comely person, and of better aspect, than I ever met with amongst this black race of mankind who are generally short siz'd . . . He is also of a quick understanding and lively action, for which reason he was a few years ago sent ambassador to France, of which country, its government, fortresses and the like, he would often entertain us in his discourses; and the hall of his house, where we had a private audience of him, was hung with the pictures of the royal family of France, and European maps, the rest of his furniture being nothing but dust and cobwebs."²⁷

25. Quoted in Georges Coedès, art. cit. *JSS*, 1921, 12.

26. *The Siamese Memoirs of Count Claude de Forbin 1685-1688*, introduced and edited by Michael Smithies, Chiang Mai, Silkwood Books, 1996, p. 155.

27. E. Kaempfer, *A Description of the Kingdom of Siam 1690* (translated by Johann Kaspar Scheuchzer), London 1727; reprinted Bangkok, 1987, p. 38.

As soon as he made sure of his power and the French were expelled or imprisoned, Phra Phetratcha, like many other usurpers, instituted a reign of terror. Kosa Pan had to endure his cruelties like everyone else. He died shortly before the atrocious execution of forty-eight *khunnang* in 1700, fed for twelve days with their own flesh before being impaled and disembowelled. We owe to Mr Bruant of the Foreign Missions the account of his death, dated August 1700: "He died two months ago, from whiplashes as much as from distress at being continually mistreated. For since royal anger cut off the end of his nose with a blow of a sabre four years previously, he only suffered persecution on the part of the court for which he was, one believes, somewhat suspect. An older daughter of his, and two or three sons, with his wives and concubines, were all arrested and tortured. His effects were seized two or three days before his death, and rumour at the court had it that out of despair, to end things, he plunged a knife into his chest . . . The body of the Barcalon [*phra khlang*] was taken at night to a pagoda to be interred without ceremony and deprived of the honour of their ordinary rites, which is to burn the body in a magnificent pyre. This was the sad end of the famous ambassador to France."²⁸

Such was the end of Kosa Pan, torn between the French model which had clearly attracted him, and the harsh Siamese model which finished by crushing him. According to Sir John Bowring, King Mongkut thought him to be the ancestor of the Chakri dynasty which has reigned for more than two centuries in Siam now styled Thailand.

5. NOTICE CONCERNING THE PRESENT EDITION

We have reproduced an edited version of the translation of Visudh Busyakul, as well as some pages of Translator's Notes which precede the journal of Kosa Pan. A brief note on the Thai calendar, also written by the translator, follows the journal. The footnotes which detail the translator's hesitations and options at obscure points or passages difficult to render literally are printed in *italics*. The reader will therefore be able to distinguish the translator's notes from those

28. Gabriel Braud to the directors of the seminary of the Missions Etrangères in Paris, August 1700; AME, vol. 864, pp. 309.

INTRODUCTION

written by the author of this introduction, which are of a more detailed and historic nature. These are printed in roman characters.

The reproduction of the first page of volume 1081 of the Archives of the Missions Etrangères was kindly supplied by Fr Gérard Moussay, the present archivist, whom we cordially thank.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

1. THE presence of the manuscript in Paris was ascertained by M.L. Manich Jumsai, a Thai scholar and a member of the Royal Institute. The facsimile was first published in 1984. In the following year, a reworked edition appeared in the January 1985 issue of the *Silpakorn Journal* (XXVI.6). It included:

a. A short introduction by Ms Kongkaew Viraprachaksa, a palaeographer of the National Library, who edited the manuscript.

b. The facsimile of the manuscript.

c. The transliteration, character by character, of the text of the manuscript.

d. A reading, using the standardized spelling of the present day, of the transliteration.

e. A glossary of difficult terms.

2. The reading as a whole is reliable. There is no arbitrary emendation. There are however defects in the facsimile process, making the reading uncertain or sometimes impossible. Unreadable passages are indicated in the transliteration and in the reading as a dotted line. Differences in identification of a few characters in the original by Ms Kongkaew and by the present translator exist. The differences do not, the translator hopes, affect the sense of the reading, but they do help the translator in guessing the spelling of some European names.

3. The facsimile was later studied by the Committee for the Edition of Thai Historical Records and was republished with a better glossary and explanatory remarks of Thai words and European proper names. The present translator found that in the edition of the *Journal* one folio was skipped over. The reading of the missing folio was supplied from the new edition and is referred to as folio 6A in this translation. The numbering of other folios follows the *Journal* edition.

The translator obtained much help from the edition of this Committee in preparing the translation.

4. With regards to European names, the author spelt them as he heard them. Many words are obviously Portuguese, for instance: *khā-ra-me-li-tā* (carmelita), *bātri* (padre), *sua-es-sen-sia* (Sua Excelência, His Excellency), *bis-pū* (bispo, bishop). Other words are evidently French, such as: *ko-ban-tang* (commandant), *in-tan-tang* or *in-tan-nang* (intendant), *ā-ra-ti-cho* (artichaut, artichoke), *so-mung* (saumon, salmon).

5. No attempt is made to give English equivalents or English names to Thai vegetables and fruit. The majority of these plants are tropical and have no equivalents in English.

6. a. The translator did his best to be faithful in his translation, with minimum omission and addition. This resulted in several awkward English expressions.

b. Some arbitrary rewriting is allowed however, especially in formal everyday greeting, for example:

"Are you feeling comfortably well?" is simply translated "How are you?" or "How have you been?"

Or "I am glad that . . ." or "I am pleased that . . ." is sometimes translated as "I am thankful for . . ." or "I appreciate that . . .", only when the translator thinks that the speaker implies it.

The translator was careful, however, that such a treatment did not materially alter the sense intended by the author of the manuscript, or affect the accuracy of the translation.

c. Thai traditional units of length and distance are converted into the metric system for easy reading. The most common important units are:

Sen: 40 metres

Wa: 2 metres

Sok (or elbow): 50 centimetres

Khuep (or span): 25 centimetres

Niu (or fingerbreadth): 2.54 centimetres

[Tradition holds that there are 12 *niu* in 1 *khuep*, in which case the metric equivalents above do not work. Since there was no exact

standard of the traditional lengths during the time of Kosa Pan, the present metric equivalents are used. Although the values are only approximate, they are accepted by most Thai historians. Outside the metric system, *wa* and *niu* are still used, with the metric equivalent above used as the actual value.]

7. Translating embroidery terminology and art terms is a problem. A Thai of the seventeenth century was looking at a French design of the seventeenth century. He compared what he saw with what he was accustomed to see in his own country, and called it with a Thai embroidery or art term. The translator has made enquiries and every effort has been made to make the translation meaningful and accurate.

V. B.

EDITOR'S NOTE

AS there were some passages which still did not read (as every translation should) as though they were originally written in the target language (here, English), further minor modifications have been made to the original translation. The most significant is the use of the phrases "the king's letter" or "the royal letter" for the original translator's "the king's autograph message", as Phra Narai neither wrote nor signed his letters. Scribes did the writing, and the seal of state was affixed to the letter; so there was no autograph. Similarly, as it is clear the ambassadors would not have received in audience common seamen, the term "officers" has been preferred.

M. S.

THE DIARY OF KOSA PAN (OK-PHRA WISUT SUNTHON)

JUNE-JULY 1686

[FOLIO 1] “. . . and would like to see how different the dresses, costume and ornaments in other countries are. You would like to see me; it is exactly the same as I would like to see you. From now on, I believe we will see each other every year.” Those ladies then departed.

BEFORE noon on Thursday, the first day of the waxing moon of the eighth month,¹ the [naval] commander² and a naval officer³ came to the ship to pay me a visit. We had a conversation together as befitted the occasion.

At noon, Monsieur Raviton⁴ and Monsieur Chamaro⁵ the assistant to the captain of the ship,⁶ came up and asked those visitors to join us for lunch.

1. The date corresponds to 20 June 1686.

2. *Manuscript: se-nā-bo-dī nāi khum tha-hān*: Lit. trans. *se-nā-bo-dī in control of the armed personnel: the (naval) commander*. This is Hubert de Champy, lord of Clouzeaux (or Desclouzeaux), intendant of the port of Brest from 1683 to 1701, after having occupied the same position in Le Havre and Dunkirk. He wrote the same day to the Marquis de Seignelay, the Minister of the Navy: “I have seen the ambassadors of Siam to whom I paid my respects and offered everything that was within my power. I agreed with the Chevalier de Chaumont that they would be shown the greatest possible honours when they go ashore.”

3. *Ms: fī-dā-wū. From Port. fidalgo. The meaning is not clear. From the context, it may mean “a man in the navy, a naval officer”*. The naval officers were all held to be of the nobility.

4. *Ms: mū-sū ra-wī-ton*. This person cannot be identified.

5. *Ms: mū-sū chā-ma-ro*. This is Monsieur de Chamoreau, ensign, and later frigate captain. Robert Challe notes that Chamoreau “seemed lively, ardent, and steadfast; furthermore, he was very well turned.” (R. Challe, *Journal d'un voyage fait aux Indes orientales*, Paris, 1983, I, p. 60.

6. The captain of the *Oiseau*, the vessel on which Kosa Pan had travelled to France, was M. de Vaudricourt.

After lunch, the assistant to the captain informed me that seven ladies, who were the wives of officers,⁷ came to give me greetings. I had them admitted to the room at the rear of the deck⁸ and had a talk with them.

[FOLIO 2] At about one o'clock in the afternoon, the captain's assistant informed me [that a group of visitors consisting of] the wife of the naval commander who was stationed in Brest, a daughter of a senior captain, ten ladies who were the wives of officers, eight officers and eight merchants came to offer me their greetings. I had them admitted into the room at the rear of the deck. After some conversation as befitted the occasion, they took their leave.

After that, a senior Carmelite priest⁹ came to bid me welcome. He said: "I learnt that you had arrived in France and am very happy to hear about it. How was your journey, and how has your health been?" — "I am very pleased that you have come to see me," I said. "The journey we made was a long one, but we met with no danger, thanks to the power of the king my lord."¹⁰ The priest then said [.....] [FOLIO 3] "I am taking leave of you. I wish you all happiness." — "Thank you very much," I answered. "I ask for the blessing from God so that you will live happily, and take good care of God's religion for future merit." He then left.

AT about three o'clock in the afternoon on Friday, the second day of the waxing moon of the eighth lunar month,¹¹ a San Paulo priest, who was the abbot of the San Paulo church [in Brest] and a friend of the San Paulo priest [Fr Tachard] who came back together [with us]

7. The original translation had "seamen", but clearly the ambassadors would not entertain non-commissioned ranks or their wives.

8. Ms: *thāi-phra*: a room at the rear of the deck. Compare *thāi-kut-tia* (note 25).

9. Ms: *bā-trī khā-ra-me-li-tā*. A "Padre Carmelita" or a Carmelite priest.

10. From the Buddhist viewpoint, the king had divine powers, and from this was the protector of all his subjects. Throughout the journal of Kosa Pan he can be seen repeating this mantra to his listeners: "Thanks to the power of the king my lord, I arrived here safely." According to the *Phongsawadan Krung Kao*, where miracles are to the forefront, a terrible whirlwind would have sunk the *Oiseau* off the coasts of Brittany if the incantations of Kosa Pan, calling on the supernatural powers of his king, had not neutralized the evil power of the elements.

11. 21 June 1686.

from the Thai kingdom,¹² came to exchange greetings with [us three envoys, namely] the first ambassador, the second ambassador and the third ambassador. We all sat in the room at the rear of the deck.

Then the priest said: "The San Paulo priest who came back together with you informed me that the sovereign of the Thai kingdom has been very kind to [him] the San Paulo priest. I am very happy to learn that you have arrived in France and I would like to enquire how you have been. I feel like having been favoured with the kindness of the Thai king myself, [FOLIO 4] and am very grateful for it. Let me ask you now how your health was when you were travelling in the middle of the ocean. Were you sick at all?"

"Thanks to the power of our king," I said, "we had no sickness of any kind. I believe that the San Paulo priest has informed you in detail how he was favoured with the grace of our king. I am much obliged that you have taken time and trouble to come to see me."

Soon after that he bade me goodbye and left.

ABOUT three o'clock in the afternoon on Saturday, the third day of the waxing moon of the eighth lunar month,¹³ the governor¹⁴ of

12. Ms: *bā-trī sam-pau-lo*: A San Paolo padre. The Jesuits, members of the powerful Company of Jesus, were known throughout Asia as the Fathers of St Paul. Their first college in Asia, St Paul in Goa (founded in 1541) enjoyed such prestige that soon all the Jesuits were called Fathers of St Paul. Their churches in Ayutthaya and Brest were also dedicated to St Paul. The "Abbot of the St Paulo Church" mentioned here was Fr Michel Bellanger, who relates in a letter to his superiors that on hearing on 18 June, about midday, the cannon shots announcing the arrival of the *Oiseau*, he ran to the port where he learnt of the presence of the Siamese ambassadors and of Fr Tachard. He continued: "I immediately took a longboat to go into the roadstead. After passing the chain, I saw the Father . . . I presented the compliments of our Society to Mr de Vaudricourt, the captain of the vessel, and to the three ambassadors of the King of Siam. The Abbé de Lionne acted as interpreter for me."

Guy Tachard was born in 1648 in Marthon, near Angoulême (some 500 km from Brest). He was the son of an apothecary, Léonard Tachard, and of Françoise Clergeon. He was the eldest of eight children, and had several younger sisters. One of them, Paule, born in 1653, was the fourth child of the Tachards. She married Nicolas Mesnard, a lawyer at Marthon, and died there in 1710.

13. 22 June 1686.

14. In a Thai source, the governor of Landerneau at that time was Monsieur Sean-tré (Saintré).

Landerneau,¹⁵ a city four leagues away from Brest and the station for starting the land journey to Paris, sent three officers¹⁶ to pay me a visit.

They said to me: "The French ambassador who came through Landerneau informed us that you were in charge of your king's letter and had arrived in the city of Brest. [FOLIO 5] The governor sent three of us here to pay you our respects and inform you that we are preparing a grand reception for you equivalent to that which we would give to the King of France."

"I am very happy to hear that," said I, "and am most heartily grateful to the governor that you are here to confirm to me his desire to promote the friendly relations between the two sovereigns of our respective countries. If my journey should pass through Landerneau, it would be an excellent opportunity for me to pay the governor my respects and have some conversation with him."

After that they took leave of us.

On that same day, three ladies that were the wives of shipping merchants living four leagues away from Brest came to exchange greetings with me. I received them and had a talk with them as befitted the occasion.

And on that same day five other ladies that were the wives of the crews of the ships came to see me. They stayed and talked with me for some time, then left.

[FOLIO 6] ON Sunday, the fourth day of the waxing moon of the eighth lunar month, the year of the Tiger and the eighth year of the Chunlasakkarat decade,¹⁷ the day marked for the official reception of the Thai king's letter, the governor,¹⁸ Monsieur l'Intendant,¹⁹ the

15. The small town of Landerneau is located 20 km (4 French leagues) to the east of Brest on the River Elorn, which flows into the roadstead.

16. *Ms: krom-ma-kān.*

17. 23 June 1686.

18. This is not the Duc de Chaulnes, governor of the province of Brittany (who is referred to in f. 63), but the military governor of the stronghold at Brest. See notes 42 and 44 below.

19. *Ms: mū-sū in-tan-tan, Monsieur l'Intendant. For convenience, "M. l'Intendant" will be used in the translation. The name is sometimes spelt "in-tan-nan".*

commissioner, the captain of the ship [the *Oiseau*] and Messire²⁰ the senior doctor, came to the ship and had lunch with me.

They told me that the Arum²¹ people raided a ship of French merchants that went on a trading venture in a gulf which was in French territory. The ship then ran aground and was wrecked. The French authorities later could arrest all of the 150 people on board the ship, 130 of whom were Arum people, and twenty were Englishmen, Dutchmen, Spaniards, and Frenchmen. The French king had the Englishmen, the Dutchmen, and the Spaniards released, but had the Arum people held in custody.

The French King then sent a squadron of twelve ships to notify King Arum Si [the Sultan of Turkey] of the incident, and asked why he, while maintaining friendly relations with the French, allowed the Arum subjects to [FOLIO 6A] attack French subjects. At any rate, in order to maintain the friendly relations between the two countries, King Arum Si [the Sultan of Turkey] had to pay a sum of two hundred thousand [francs] to compensate for the expenses incurred in sending the squadron of ships there.²²

I expressed my opinion that it was proper for France to send the squadron there as a strong protest, but it was also possible that the King Arum Si [the Sultan of Turkey] might be completely ignorant of

20. Ms: *mae-si mô-phū-yai*, lit. *mae-si senior doctor*. Possibly *mae-si* is from Fr. *Maître* or *Messire*.

21. Ms: *a-rum*, very likely the Turks. The name of their king in the manuscript is *A-rum-si*.

22. The *Mémoires* of the Marquis de Sourches relate on 17 April 1686, two months before the arrival of Kosa Pan at Brest, an incident demonstrating the feeble state of the Ottoman empire under Mehmed IV after the failed siege of Vienna in 1683. Desirous of arming a fleet, but lacking the resources, the sultan authorized his soldiers to "take" what they needed. A general pillage ensued which did not spare the French who had settled in Turkey. There was some fighting, Frenchmen were killed, Louis XIV sent warships to Constantinople, and the French ambassador Girardin demanded reparations. Sourches ends his entry: "He was accorded all that he demanded, and the [Turkish] naval commander even went to present his apologies to the [French] commodore commanding the king's vessels. This was an extraordinary submission, and until then without precedent from the Turks, but the king had found the means to impose respect and fear on them." (Sourches, *Mémoires*, Paris, 1882, I, 377–378) The seventeenth-century French *franc* or *livre* (divided into 20 *sols* or *sous*) was roughly the equivalent of US\$1. Three *francs* or *livres* made one *écu*.

the incident in which the Arum pirates attacked the French merchant ship.²³

At about two o'clock in the afternoon, priests, naval officers, officials, and men and women from the city came in thirty boats to receive the Thai king's letter. Among these boats, the one assigned to carry the royal letter was a ship about 18 m long and 4 m wide.²⁴ It has a room at the rear of the deck.²⁵

The roof of the ship is laid over with silk fabric embroidered with gold threads and tied in knots in places. Other designs are woven with gold threads. It is further decorated with silk straps and fringes and pendant tufts of gold cords. The wall of the room is carved and gilded. The two sides of the ship and the front bow are also gilded. [FOLIO 7] The wall inside the room has paintings in bencharong²⁶ patterns. Windows are lined with glass panes. At the front of the ship four two-inch cannons are mounted. In the front part of the room there is a raised platform covered with a carpet on which the pavilion²⁷ holding the royal letter is to be placed.

23. The reactions of Kosa Pan are those of a seasoned diplomat.

24. *Lit. trans.*: 9 wa long and 2 wa wide. For convenience, units of length will be converted into metric measures.

25. *Thāi-kiut-tia*: "A room at the rear of the deck", similar to *thāi-phra* (see note 8).

26. Ms: *ben-cha-rong*, *lit. trans.* "in five colours", said of colours on ceramics and, later on, paintings. The five colours are white, black, yellow, green, and red. Later, *bencharong* refers to multi-coloured paintings, especially on ceramics, the background of which is not white. The actual number of colours used may be more or less than five. Gold and silver colours are later accepted as *bencharong* colours.

27. Ms: *mo-ra-dop*, *Sk. mandapa*. A pavilion. Kosa Pan had told Desclouzeaux that he would only leave the *Oiseau* with the letter from Phra Narai for Louis XIV, but that the pyramidal pavilion which contained it had suffered during the journey and required some repairs. The intendant sent some workmen on board the *Oiseau* to put the pavilion aright. Fr Tachard describes the letter's containers in detail: "The Letter was in a Gold Box shaped like a Cone and this Box was put in another bigger Silver Box, which was enclosed within a third of Japan Wood varnished, wrapped up in a piece of rich Silk Stuff flowered with Gold. All this was in a gilt Pyramid placed aloft on the Stern of the Frigate [sic], with many Parasols to cover it." (G. Tachard, *A Relation of the Voyage to Siam performed by Six Jesuits*, London, Robinson and Churchill [sic], 1688, p. 252). This pyramidal pavilion (which the French, for want of an appropriate term, were to call "la machine") was a huge transportable altar surrounded by four

The boats intended for Thai junior officials²⁸ have the roof lined with white fabric. The backs of the seats on these boats are carved and gilded. The seat cushions are covered with red silk fabric embroidered in raised patterns. There are also boats for other crewmen and officers and officials. These boats have a white flag hoisted on each of them, and seat six or seven or eight of these people.

At the moment these boats started off, the flagship²⁹ which was assigned to carry the royal letter fired a two-gun salute.

The governor, the naval commander, and the officials then came up to see me on the ship. I addressed the commander as follows: [FOLIO 8] "I am very much impressed with the beautiful arrangements which have been made for the reception of the letter of the king or [our] vast kingdom, and also for honouring me, his ambassador."

One of the gentlemen mentioned above³⁰ answered: "We however feel that our arrangements for the reception of the royal letter, and of you the ambassador, still leave many things to be desired. This is because most of our men are on duty far away from the city, leaving only a few of them available for the work to be undertaken."

"I know that your men are away on duty," said I, "but the work which has been accomplished is well done and very becoming to a friendly country. As to your endeavour to promote the mutual friendship of the two sovereigns of our respective countries, please be assured of my appreciation of it. I am extremely happy about everything."

[FOLIO 9] "We actually intended to make more elaborate arrangements," the gentleman went on. "Due to the lack of men who have to be away on official business, with only a limited number of men to hand, we have assigned additional citizens carrying firearms to

fluted columns upholding a square roof tapering into a spire, the whole gilded all over. Eight Swiss guards were needed to transport it for the ambassadors' solemn audience.

28. *Ms: khun-mun: Thai junior officials. The ranks of the Thai hierarchy, used as a title prefixed to the name, from high to low, were Phra-ya, Phra, Luang, Khun, Mun. Also Ok-ya, Ok-phra, Ok-luang, Ok-khun, and Ok-mun.*

29. *Lit. trans. "The boat for the king's message". For the sake of brevity, it will be arbitrarily translated as the "flagship" from now on.*

30. *Lit. trans. "He who has name", one of the persons named before. The expression is not in use at the present time, but is used several times in this manuscript.*

join in the reception procession. Some of them will be on land while others will be in boats. In any event, we hope that the ships that have been on duty away from here arrive in time for you to see them."

"Let me express my sincere thanks to you all for having given honour to me, the ambassador of a great king, and for coming to receive me here today," said I.

After that all those senior gentlemen went on board the flagship which was especially assigned to carry the letter of the king.

At about two o'clock in the afternoon, [the pavilion containing] the royal letter was ceremoniously carried on board the flagship, and was placed on the carpeted platform which was previously described. We three envoys took our seat [FOLIO 10] at the back part of the room [behind the pavilion]. Khun Raksa-Phūbendra and Khun Narendra-Senā stood in front of the raised platform on which was placed the pavilion which contained the royal letter.

The moment the flagship carrying the letter started moving [from its mooring in the sea], the captain of the ship [the *Oiseau*] ordered a twenty-one-gun salute, and five cheers in French. Then followed a nineteen-gun salute from another smaller ship [the *Maligne*], with five cheers. All other boats in the procession then raised three cheers. Then the cannons at the forts on both banks at the mouth of the estuary fired an eleven-gun salute. When the flagship carrying the royal letter turned around and passed beyond the rear of the ship, the ship's pilot ordered, for my honour, a nineteen-gun salute and three rounds of cheers from the ship, a seventeen-gun salute and three cheers from the smaller ship, and three cheers from all the boats. The flagship carrying the royal letter then fired four rounds.

After the flagship carrying the king's letter entered the estuary and passed the mouth of the river³¹ by about 40 m,³² the forts situated on both sides of the river began firing their cannons from all the portholes. [FOLIO 11] The firing continued back and forth from the two forts and around the city on both sides of the river until the royal letter was carried up from the ship and passed into the building. Even

31. The River Elorn.

32. Lit. "one sen". A sen is a unit of length of 40 metres. Others are wah (two metres), sok (elbow, 50 cm), khuap (span, 25 cm), and niu (fingerbreadth, 2.54 cm). The metric units will be used in the translation, with the Thai units given in the footnotes for reference.

then, the firing continued, but with longer and longer intervals between shots until dark. It was impossible to count the number of rounds fired during the occasion.

Lining the left side of the river, civilians carrying flintlocks³³ stood about three arms-length apart from each other for a distance of about 60 m.³⁴ Then more civilians holding flags and lances continued the lines further for another distance of about 800 m,³⁵ from the mouth of the estuary up to the quay. On the righthand side, about one hundred soldiers carrying flintlocks, four flags, and four lances stood in line up to the quay.

After the letter had been carried down from the ship, the officers and [FOLIO 12] the shipping merchants formed themselves into procession lines and walked along by the side of the pavilion for a distance of about 80 m³⁶ to the gate leading to the reception building. The four sentinels on guard there gave the salute by turning their guns and lances upside down pointing to the ground.

On land, about sixty senior and junior officials, naval officers, two priests, and a large multitude of townsfolk who came to see the procession filled up the entire area from the quay to the entrance of the building. When the letter had passed into the building, the soldiers in the procession fired three successive shots in unison.³⁷

33. *Ms: pun-nok-sap, a kind of long-barrelled gun with a flintlock-firing mechanism.*

34. *Ms: 1.5 sen.*

35. *Ms: 20 sen.*

36. *Ms: 2 sen.*

37. Vacher, whose memoirs complement the journal of Kosa Pan, describes the solemn transfer of the letter in this way: "Towards two in the afternoon, the intendant, the governor, all the officers, all the captains of vessels in their longboats, accompanying a galley decked out with cloth of gold and a thousand streamers of white embroidered satin, with on the poop a kind of triumphal arch of immaculate cleanliness which could contain ten persons, fifty sailors to row it, dressed very smartly, and bearing three small silvered cannons, trumpets, cymbals, hautboys, innumerable violins, all these gentlemen, I say, in this impressive company gently approached our ship in marvellous order. For half-an-hour there was no firing, to give our ambassadors the time to take up their positions. They sat in the seats of honour: Messers de Chaumont and de Choisy after them, the intendant on their right, and the governor on their left, the interpreter and I by the side of these gentlemen, the other Siamese mandarins in

Up in the reception building, the pavilion was placed on the prepared platform. Four umbrellas³⁸ were placed [at the corners] and a top canopy was laid [over the pavilion].

After that, Monsieur l'Intendant led me into [my] room which had been beautifully decorated.³⁹ The governor, Monsieur le Commandant du Dépôt⁴⁰ in charge of the naval base, and senior and junior officials, the ships' captains and many officers, [FOLIO 13] altogether about eighty persons, accompanied me [to my residence]. I addressed them as follows:

"Monsieur the governor, Monsieur the commander and all of you, I sincerely appreciate what you all have done in rendering excellent and proper service to your master the king. Your work is really becoming to the fame and honour of the two sovereigns of our respective countries. May I express my most sincere thanks to all of you."

"We really appreciate all that you have said," answered one of the gentlemen whom I addressed. "Actually, we planned an elaborate reception for your honour, but this city is small, with a limited number of inhabitants. This is all we could do under the circumstances."

the longboats sent for them, the King of Siam's letter in a gold box on the knees of the first ambassador. Each keeping his position, we at once began to be rowed. The *Oiseau* gave a general discharge of all its cannons, the *Maligne* copied it, and the fortress, the port, the roadstead, and all the vessels replied with so many cannon shots that the night was already advanced when they were still firing. On coming ashore, we found all the garrison and the burgesses in arms, forming two rows, between which we passed. There was a huge crowd which had assembled from the surrounding neighbourhood." Cited in A. Launay, *Histoire de la mission de Siam 1662-1811 - Documents historiques*, Paris, 1920, I, 181.

38. Ms: *sap-pa-thon*. A kind of decoration of rank in the form of a large umbrella, used in a set of four, one at each corner of the object of veneration.

39. Vachet explains: "[The intendant] made sure of preparing for us an entry which was comparable to the magnificence of that we had seen in Siam. His house, which is the king's, is very spacious and very richly furnished. He only kept a small apartment for himself and his wife, and gave us use of all the rest, where the ambassadors and their suite were lodged." Quoted in A. Launay, op. cit., I, 180.

40. Ms: *mū-sū ko-ban-dang de-po*: the commander of the depot.

"I believe that all of you are sincere to promote the friendship between the two countries; this is what I am really concerned and happy about. In addition, let me say that I am proud and very pleased that you, the government officials of the city, as well as the inhabitants of the city, have come to give me your best wishes. May all of you have my very sincere thanks for all that you have done."

Those senior officials and the inhabitants of the city then bowed to me and took leave of me. Just as the governor [FOLIO 14] bowed to me and was on the point of leaving, I said to him: "I must thank you sincerely, governor. You are an intelligent man, loyal to your king, and devoted to your duty which becomes the fame and honour of your king. It is because of this that your king is very pleased with you. He even said that your father was an old man, and in case he should pass away, you should become the governor in his stead."

"Yes, the position of a governor is now mine. I had been the governor for only five days when the royal letter from your king arrived, and I had the opportunity to perform this special duty for my king right away, and I am proud and happy to do it."

"The fact is that you have done so much of this work and have done it so well," said I. "Your king should be happy to give you another promotion."⁴¹ The governor then took leave.

Later, the governor led about twenty persons to see me, namely [his] wife, the maternal aunt-in-law of the then deceased King of England,⁴² wives of the naval officers and other respectable ladies

41. *It is strange to find this conversation between the Thai ambassador and the governor. The ambassador had not yet met King Louis, and even if he might be given a personal audience, such a topic was extremely unlikely. The translator believes that this is what was meant: "If this were in Siam, a loyal and devoted man like you could become a governor in place of your father when he passes away."* This passage is indeed bizarre, but one has to remember that in France positions were purchasable, and a functionary or officer of the crown, on reaching an age at which it was appropriate to retire, could sell his post or pass it to his son with the authorization of the king, which was rarely refused.

42. This detail makes the passage even less likely and can perhaps be put down to an interpreter's error. Whoever was the governor in question, his wife could not be "the maternal aunt-in-law of the then deceased King of England". Charles II, King of England, had died in February 1685. He had married the Portuguese infanta Catherine of Braganza, daughter of D. João IV, the founder of the Braganza dynasty, and of Dona Luisa de Gusmão, daughter of the eighth duke of Medina-Sidónia.

from the city. I welcomed them and addressed them as follows: [FOLIO 15] "In the position of the ambassador of my lord the sovereign of the Thai kingdom, let me thank you all very sincerely for the warm reception you have given me." They bowed and then took leave of me.

At about four o'clock a naval officer came to see me and said to me: "Monsieur le Commandant du Dépôt sends me to receive any order which Your Excellency⁴³ may be pleased to give and I will see that it is properly done. Two guards have been assigned and stationed here to give you protection day and night. The priest [Fr Vachet] has also told you of the tradition of our people in rendering service to our king. When the king goes on an expedition, the commander will come to see him daily in the evening to receive one or two words of importance [i.e. secret passwords] for the day. The commander will in strict confidence instruct the officers in charge of security of the passwords concerned. In case an enemy enters the area in disguise, the application of the password will reveal if the trespasser is on the side of the enemy or belongs to our side. [FOLIO 16] In the city of Brest, the governor is the person who determines the passwords each day.⁴⁴ Now Your Excellency is present in this city, and because you are in a position senior to the governor, I am here to ask you to choose the passwords. Our tradition is definite that only the most senior person has this privilege. Therefore, it may be in the afternoon or in the evening that he will send someone to ask for the password from you."

I gave "Un royaume" (One kingdom) as the password for the first day, "Vive le Roi de France" (Long live the King of France) for the second day, and "Vive le Roi de Siam" (Long live the King of Siam) for the third day.

The building which Monsieur l'Intendant chose as the place for keeping the royal letter and as my residence, is located near the water.⁴⁵ The cross-beam of the building is 10 m long, and the beam

43. Ms: *sua-es-sen-sia*, from Port. *Sua Excelência*.

44. This detail, which is perfectly correct, confirms that the governor in question was the military governor of Brest. It is true that "the governor [of the stronghold] gave the password every day and did the rounds to check on the effectiveness of the guards posted." (G. Bodinier in *Dictionnaire du Grand Siècle*, Paris, 1990, 667). Kosa Pan elsewhere (f. 21) names him "city governor".

45. It has been seen above (note 39) that the Siamese ambassadors and their retinue were lodged in the residence of the intendant Desclouzeaux, which was in principle the residence of the king when he stayed in Brest. It was called on account of this "the king's mansion" (see f. 19).

lengthwise 50 m long.⁴⁶ The building is U-shaped, with the roof sloping down outwards, similar to the continuous balcony in a Buddhist monastery.⁴⁷ On the north side, there is a room extending outward from the main building on the same floor level, and from there there is a platform, 3 m⁴⁸ wide, projecting out beyond the room and over the water, with protective iron railings about 1 m high.⁴⁹ There are four storeys in the building.

[The room for keeping] the royal letter and for my accommodation is on the second floor. In the room that was set aside for my accommodation, there is a bed, [FOLIO 17] the bedposts of which are about 3 m⁵⁰ high. On top of the bed is fixed a canopy and are hung curtains of red silk embroidered in raised patterns, and with ornamental straps made of woven gold and silver threads and hemmed with multistrand cords. On top of each bedpost is placed a miniature multi-tiered umbrella⁵¹ made of woollen material.

There are four layers of mattresses on the bed. The pillow case is made of fine French linen. The top mattress is covered with a white bedsheet. On the blanket, there are red and green Atalat silk⁵² strips sewn together in lantern-shaped designs⁵³ and filled with Surat⁵⁴ cotton of superior quality. There is a sheet of red silk embroidered in a raised pattern, decorated with ornamental straps made of woven gold and silver threads over the Atalat silk strips. Another white sheet is laid on top overall. All around on four sides there are curtains of red

46. Ms: 5 wa and 25 wa. The wall to wall size of the building is 10 by 50 metres.

47. A free translation. The strict word-for-word translation from the Thai text is very short and hard to understand. It also sounds very awkward.

48. Ms: 6 sok (elbows). One elbow approximates to 50 cm.

49. Ms: 2 sok.

50. Ms: 6 sok.

51. Ms: chat. A multi-tiered umbrella as an official rank symbol. The king's umbrella is white and has nine tiers. It may be that Kosa Pan mistook the tufts of ostrich feathers or bunches of ribbons decorating the corners of the formal state beds for Thai parasols.

52. Ms: atalat. Arabic atlas, a kind of fabric woven with silk and gold or silver thread.

53. Ms: lai-khom, lit. lantern-design. A Thai embroidery design.

54. Ms: Su-rat. The name of the city on the west coast of India, famous for high quality textile fabrics.

silk embroidered with raised patterns decorated with ornamental straps of woven gold and silver threads, complete with holding straps.

On the walls and the ceilings of that building, there are paintings in bencharong colouring technique alternating with gold floral designs. Tapestries with beautiful corner designs are hung on the wall on three sides of the bedroom. There is a Semā-shaped⁵⁵ mirror about 1.25 m wide and 1.50 m high.⁵⁶ Its frame is copper carved in perforated designs and is overlaid with gold. The mirror is fixed on the remaining [FOLIO 18] wall facing the bed. There are four panels in the room, on one of which is painted the portrait of the French king, on another one a portrait of Monsieur Sing-lae,⁵⁷ a senior member of the cabinet. There are paintings of birds, flowers, and fruits on two other panels.

A sofa with three cushions in green velvet upholstery is provided in the room. There are also nine chairs carved in French design, with red silk upholstery decorated with ornamental straps made of woven gold and silver threads. The bed and the red-silk chairs are all covered with white Pastu⁵⁸ woollen fabric.

There are two tables⁵⁹ on which one can put objects. On top of these tables a carpet is fixed in French style, leaving the wooden margin inlaid with ivory. On one of these, also inlaid with ivory designs at the corners, are placed two wooden candlesticks. There is a fireplace for keeping the room warm when it is cold. Its chimney goes up through the roof. Its housing has carved French ornamental patterns and is overlaid with gold [leaf]. Windows are equipped with white curtains which can be opened or closed by pulling a string.

Monsieur l'Intendant said to me: "When the French king came to visit this city, he always stayed in this building. We therefore call this building [FOLIO 19] the king's mansion."

55. *Semā-shaped, a popular Thai shape for plaques and other flat objects. Roughly like an inverted arch, concave at the top, then symmetrically curved down like a capital S on both sides and joining at the bottom.*

56. *Lit. trans.: two elbows and one span wide and three elbows high.*

57. Jean-Baptiste Colbert, Marquis de Seignelay (1651–1690), son of the statesman Colbert, was minister and secretary of state for the navy.

58. *Ms: pas-tū, a kind of fluffy woollen fabric.*

59. *Ms: tiang-rong-khong, lit. a bed for putting miscellaneous objects on. No other word for "table" occurs in the text. It should not mean a "bench" either.*

On the walls and the ceiling of the room for the second ambassador are paintings of bouquets and rich foliage in glossy colours. On three sides of the walls of the bedroom they hung up tapestries depicting troops on campaign.⁶⁰ There is also a bed; the curtains as well as the canopy over it are all in banana-leaf green and ornamented with drapery embroidered in floral designs with fringes.

There are four panels with portraits painted on them. Fixed on one side of the wall there is a mirror 37 cm wide and 50 cm high.⁶¹ There are seven chairs in the room. The bed and the chairs are all covered with green fluffy Pastu woollen material. Two blankets are provided; one is made of Chit-su-rat⁶² textile material, while another is made of silk, both matching the curtains in colour and with a lining. A sheet of white cloth is then put over the blankets.

There is a table with green woollen cover and silk edgings. The door has a drapery drawn over it with silk fringes in green like [FOLIO 20] the bed curtain. The drapery on the window is made of Chit-su-rat cotton fabric. There is also a fireplace ornamented with carved wood patterns in the French style.

The walls and ceiling of the room set up for the use of the third ambassador are painted white, decorated with lantern-shaped designs alternating with gold floral patterns. The bed, the curtains, and the canopy are like those in the room for the second ambassador. The blanket is made of French linen filled with cotton, and put under a white linen covering. There are seven chairs with green woollen Pastu upholstery. The fireplace is decorated with paintings of grass bushes in bright yellow and gold.

Fr Vachet⁶³ and Monsieur l'Intendant at first planned to keep the

60. Ms: *lâi-phon-la-rop*, lit. design showing troops in campaign. It clearly refers to a series of Gobelins tapestries representing battle scenes.

61. Lit. trans.: one khuep and five niu wide and one sok high. See note 32.

62. *Chit-su-rat*, the highest quality cotton cloth from the Coromandel coast of India. In Thai, it is limited to the cloth available in Madras and Masulipatam on the eastern coast. The patterns on it are usually very fine. The term *chit* or *chitte* (English *chintz*), is derived from the Hindi *chint* (Sanskrit *citra*, meaning variegated) designating a mottled cloth. This is a painted and/or printed fabric.

63. Bénigne Vachet, of the French Foreign Missions, born in Dijon in 1641, first arrived in Ayutthaya in July 1671. He divided his missionary efforts between Siam and Cochín-China, but his superiors were at a loss for how to use him, given his unstable character, his continual tittle-tattle in which he did not

pavilion containing the royal letter in the room prepared for me. It was however found that the pavilion was too large to go through the door. It was for this reason put in a larger room. On the wall on all four sides of that room tapestries with corner patterns were hung up. A carpeted raised platform was also brought in, and the pavilion was placed upon it. Fifteen chairs with bencharong hibiscus patterns on the upholstery were then put in that room.

The real casket containing [FOLIO 21] the royal letter was placed in my room, with curtains and a canopy formally hung over it.

I also had a canopy and curtains put up over and around the pavilion, and umbrellas were placed at the corners in such a manner as if the royal letter were still kept inside the pavilion.

In the evening that day, Monsieur l'Intendant came to take us three Thai envoys to dinner on the floor below. I took my seat on the especially provided chair. Those who came to dinner with us were as follows: the city governor, Monsieur l'Intendant, Monsieur Or-li-vé,⁶⁴ Monsieur Vaudricourt the captain of the ship [the *Oiseau*], and Fr Vacher.

At the start of the dinner, food was brought and placed upon the table in five large trays. One tray contained pork, one tray was for mutton, one for beef, and two for duck and chicken. The food mentioned [here] was meant to be eaten with bread. After eating these, the trays were taken away one by one. Then new trays were brought in containing grilled and roasted food, fried and fresh [FOLIO 22] vegetables, boiled and roasted peas, totalling seventeen trays. Two of these trays were for chicken and duck, one for grilled mutton, one

mince his words, his predisposition to exaggerate, and his alcoholic excesses. This probably explains why he was designated to escort Khun Phichai Walit and Khun Phichit Maitri to France in 1684; they were sent by Phra Narai to enquire about the fate of the *Soleil d'Orient* (see introduction). He returned to Siam with the Chaumont embassy in 1685, and went back to France with this mission, serving as interpreter to the Siamese delegation, which he initiated into French customs. He was subsequently kept away from the discussions concerning Franco-Siamese relations, and retired to his native Burgundy. He was sent to Persia in 1689, but returned to France after two years. He then remained in the seminary in the Rue du Bac in Paris, where he died in 1720.

64. *Ms*: *or-li-vé* A locally important person in Brest, difficult to identify; possibly Olivet.

for buttered and grilled whole baby pork, one for grilled goat's meat, one for mixed grills, chicken, birds, and pork grilled and put together.

Every tray of grilled meat had parsley set around the food. One of the trays contained grilled mutton, another fried breaded chicken. One salad tray contained several vegetables topped with vinegar and salad oil, another tray for many kinds of succulent herbs, also topped with vinegar and salad oil. One tray was for boiled artichokes⁶⁵ that looked like our ta-not-bua-khom or lotus suckers, one for fried potatoes, another tray for a pan-fried vegetable called ka-pe-ra-ya⁶⁶ that looked like our rāk-sām-sip or arrowroot, one tray for pan-fried bean-pods similar to our thua-kiu-nāng, one for a kind of peas like our thua-phū (winged beans) by the name of pra-chau.⁶⁷ This kind of pea was very popular with the French people; a tray of cooked beans of this kind would cost as much as ten francs. One tray was for another kind of pan-fried peas, known as faeu.⁶⁸ They looked similar to our thua-phra-bāt. These varieties of food were served to us [FOLIO 23] one at a time and were eaten while drinking red grape wine diluted with water.

After finishing these, the trays were taken away and three more trays containing deserts and five kinds of fruit brought in. One kind of fruit, called fra-buay,⁶⁹ was red and sour and looked like our thom-ma-nā. Another kind, which was called fre-se,⁷⁰ looked like our lūk-ta-lot-nam, tasting sour and sweet. Then there was sé-ri-sa,⁷¹ looking like our lūk-ta-khop, tasting sour and sweet. Another kind was called pa-ron,⁷² similar to our phum-ma-riang, somewhat sour. The fruit, if eaten fresh, was topped with sugar, syrup, or cream.

One kind of dessert was made of flour and sugar, and pressed into pancakes, often seen for sale in shops. Another kind was made of cream beaten and foamed up. Another was sugar-coated pā-dā nuts [i.e. candied almonds]. Then there was a kind of flower dipped [FOLIO 24] into sugar and then left to dry in scattered crystals like sesame

65. Ms: ā-ra-tī-cho. French "artichaut" (artichoke).

66. Ms: ka-pe-ra-ya. Perhaps French "champignon" (mushroom).

67. Ms: pra-chau. Prob. French "pois jaunes" (yellow peas).

68. Ms: faeu. Prob. French "fève" (broad beans).

69. Ms: fra-buay. French "framboise" (raspberry).

70. Ms: fre-se. French "fraise" (strawberry).

71. Ms: se-rī-sa. French "cerise" (cherry).

72. Ms: pā-ron. French "prune" (plum).

seeds. Then there was a kind of dessert made of rose petals dipped in sugar and formed in thin chips, some white and some red. Another kind of dessert was made of dried candied orange peel cut into thin slices. Another tray contained large oval-shaped lemons and oranges placed alternately. There was also a multi-tiered holder, each tier holding varieties of sweets and sugar candy in small dishes, with another dish set on top. There were three presentations like this, each consisting of three trays, made up of two medium ones and a large one.

There were three kinds of drinks. The red wine was drunk while eating bread. The white wine flavored with cinnamon, and a yellowish wine made from grapes, were served after the meal.⁷³

After dinner, the governor, Monsieur l'Intendant and others who joined us for dinner then started talking about the fruits in Ayutthaya. I also told them that in our country, during the [FOLIO 25] meat course, we sometimes ate bread with milk and molasses, sometimes bread with pan-fried meat. We then ate pie made of meat and flour, and drank red grape juice in place of water. At midday, our meal consisted of bread and chicken and boiled turnip-like vegetables and

73. Vachet's account of this banquet is interesting: "Hardly had we entered the house than the mayor and magistrates of the town appeared to address the ambassadors and offer them presents, consisting of wine, preserves, dragées, candles, and various fruits in season. The indendant's lady had assembled all the ladies of Brest, dressed in their finest, who saluted the ambassadors as they entered the main hall. This was the first time in their lives that the ambassadors had the honour to kiss foreign ladies on the cheek, about which, for fear of surprising them, they had been alerted. The first ambassador took the hand of the intendant's lady, who led him into a magnificent room where a splendid collation awaited him. At nine in the evening, a table with twenty-four places with the most delectable dishes was served. In addition to this table, there were six others with eight places, which were all served at the same time. Throughout the meal, there was music, and from time to time some fine singers performed. Finally they broke up to let the ambassadors rest. What surprised me was to notice that our first ambassador was not in the least embarrassed, and he played his part to perfection, which I thought a good augury for the future. It is indeed true that during the sea voyage we had often discussed the ceremonies and customs of France, with the result that they did not appear so novel as they would to a man who had never heard of them previously." Quoted in A. Launay, *op. cit.*, I, 181.

steamed fish. The dishes were similar each day, but there were several varieties. Each meal during the day might vary from a few to nine or ten trays, as desired.

[.....] the Thai junior officials, Antoine the novice,⁷⁴ the interpreter, and other Thai attendants⁷⁵ stayed together in a building about 400 m⁷⁶ away from the building where the royal letter was kept. This building was enclosed by a wall. On the west side there was an orchard and a vegetable garden. The building was about 24 m long, 10 m wide and 12 m high;⁷⁷ it had four storeys. The Thai junior officials and the attendants had their quarters on the second floor. The junior officials shared their room with the novice. Khun Narendra-Senā had a bed by himself, with a white mattress and a white bedsheet. On two sides of the bed were hung green Pastu curtains.

Khun [FOLIO 26] Raksa-Phūbendra and Monsieur Chik-ku,⁷⁸ our two interpreters, stayed in the building where the royal letter was kept. Each was provided with a bed. Each bed had two white mattresses and a blanket made with striped Chit-su-rat material filled with cotton. A white cover was put on top overall. The curtain was made of yellow Pastu material. The bedding arrangement provided for each interpreter was the same. Mattresses were laid on the floor for the four muens, Antoine the novice, and the interpreter. The covers on these mattresses were of Pastu material, in red or green or white.

At meal times, these people went down to eat their meal on the lower floor. There were twelve chairs there, some with linen covers,

74. António Pinto, called "Monsieur Antoine", was the son of a Portuguese father, a pilot in Tenasserim, and a Siamese mother. He began in 1669 his studies in the college of the Foreign Missions, and then entered their seminary at Mahapram, near Ayutthaya. He was a gifted linguist, speaking Portuguese, Siamese, Vietnamese, French, and Latin. He defended a thesis in theology at the Sorbonne at the end of 1686, and then went to Rome, where he was received in audience by Pope Innocent XI. He completed his studies in Rome at the college of the Propaganda Fide, where he was ordained priest. He returned to Siam at the beginning of 1695, but this brilliant Eurasian priest died in Ayutthaya in August 1696.

75. Ms: *khon-chai*, a servant.

76. Ms: 10 sen.

77. Lit. trans.: 12 wa long, 5 wa wide, 6 wa high.

78. Ms: *Nai Chik-kā*.

others with yellow Pastu covers. No Frenchmen kept them company when they ate. Meals were served to them twice a day.

At noon time, they had soup with bread and chicken and mutton. After the plates were taken away, roast lamb, sliced beef, buttered and grilled chicken, bird and rabbit's meat were brought in and served in trays. There was also a tray of fried minced lamb, and a tray of salad with vinegar, a tray of another vegetable (similar to our phak-bia) topped with salad oil, [FOLIO 27] two trays of boiled artichokes and fried potatoes. After this, trays were taken away and fresh fruits were served.

One kind of fruit was called fra-buay. It was red like our kra-thum-nam. Then they served another kind of fruit which was called fre-sa, red like our lük-ta-lot-nam or lük-bā-dam. There was also fresh milk brought in on a tray. The fruit was usually sprinkled with sugar before being eaten. Another tray contained a kind of sweet made of wheat flour mixed with sugar and eggs. They also served salty milk⁷⁹ on a tray. After eating, the trays were taken away. This was the kind of meal for our attendants which was served twice a day.

AT nine o'clock on Monday, the fifth day of the waxing moon in the eighth month,⁸⁰ twenty-seven judges who were in charge of cases in the law court came to see me. I said to them: "I am happy and feel very much obliged that you have given me such an honour as to have taken the trouble to come to pay me a visit." After that they said goodbye to me and left.

Later on, Monsieur le Commandant du Dépôt, a captain and five officers came to see me. [FOLIO 28] They asked me how we were, and I answered: "We are very well, thank you. We have to thank you especially for all your concern about us and especially your efforts and arrangements for our welfare and safety." – "Do not mention it. It is our responsibility to look after you and take care of you," said the commandant. "It is natural that you have to perform your duty," said I, "but what I really appreciate is your readiness and willingness to perform this duty of yours for our sake. This is why I am very thankful to you." After that those gentlemen bade me goodbye and left.

At about midday, ladies in the city of Brest came to see me in

79. *The Thai text has literally "condensed milk" or "salty milk". Possibly cheese.*

80. 24 June 1686.

groups of five, or seven, or eight. I had a conversation with each group as befitted the occasion, after which they said goodbye to me and left.

At about one o'clock in the afternoon, Monsieur l'Intendant, the commissioner, the governor, the honourable senior doctor, and four officers came to see me and had lunch with me. After lunch, the governor took me with him on a boat and we went to see a large ship, the *Amiral*.⁸¹

This ship was larger than all other ships, and was specially furnished [FOLIO 29] for the accommodation of the king who would be the chief person on board. This ship was 47.7 m long and 12.7 m wide.⁸² On the bow of the ship was a gilded figure of a man spearing a fish.⁸³ To the rear was sculptured the figure of the king and figures of other men. The sides of the ship and the portholes were beautifully carved and then gilded.

The ship has four levels or portholes and is equipped with 134 cannons, from eight-inch down to three-inch calibre. Arms and ammunition are kept on the lowest deck. The deck above that one is for the king and high-ranking officials. The bed for the king is in the French style, gilded and surrounded with railings decorated with gold inlaid French designs. Then there are wooden strips laid across these panels, painted in glossy colours and decorated with gilded angular designs.

The quarters for the crew and the ship captain are on the third deck. The fourth deck is for the assistants to the captain and the [FOLIO 30] counsellors. Both decks are painted in glossy colours and

81. Ms: *la-mā-ran*, probably "*l'amiral*". Kosa Pan did not visit the *Amiral* (no vessel with this name is mentioned in the lists of Louis XIV's vessels), but the flagship ("*vaisseau amiral*" in French) of the Western squadron (the Atlantic fleet), namely the *Soleil Royal*. This was the finest of all Louis XIV's warships. Of 2,000 tons burden and carrying 110 cannons (and not 134), the *Soleil Royal* with its three bridges (and not four) was decorated by the famous sculptors Coysevox and Puget. This marvel of French naval art was built in Brest from 1669 to 1671. Commanded by Duquesne, then by Tourville, the *Soleil Royal* conducted its most glorious campaign during the battle of Beachy Head in 1690, but was sunk by the English in front of Cherbourg in 1692. A new and bigger *Soleil Royal* was built in Brest in 1693.

82. Ms: *1 sen 3 wa 3 elbows 1 span 4 fingers long, and 6 wa 1 elbow 1 span 4 fingers across*.

83. The god of the sea, Neptune, carrying a trident.

decorated with gilded angular designs. The pilot has his quarters on the rear part of the upper deck.

[The governor took me for a tour around Brest.]

There were thirty-seven ships in the river of Brest altogether, but twenty were away on official duty in Cadiz. These ships were smaller in size than the *Amiral*, down to only 6 m⁸⁴ across. The bow and the rear of some of these ships were simply gilded, while others were painted in bright yellow and gold patterns. They were anchored up along the river to the fort behind the city.

There is a stream which flows down from the east into the estuary at Brest.⁸⁵ There is also a water-mill where saltpetre⁸⁶ is manufactured. After three bends further upstream there is a warehouse for ship masts and timber for the shipyards. After this the governor took me to see two forts at the river mouth.⁸⁷ I have already written about the forts and the city walls which are beyond the forts.⁸⁸

[FOLIO 31] On the west side of the river from the fort, in the city of Brest, there are three buildings for the storage of bread, fish, peas, fruit, oil, and wine as provisions for the ships. Further north there is a building for storage of saltpetre. Next to that building are buildings for the city inhabitants, some of the buildings have three floors, others four. The ground floor is usually used as shops. These buildings are constructed in a long row up to the building where I stay.

From that point on, there are warehouses built next to each other, with a continuous roof, to the fort situated at the corner of the city. Then there are two buildings for keeping ship masts. On the bank of the river are the buildings of the townspeople standing next to each other.

On the eastern bank next to the fort, there is a narrow road or footpath between two lines of row houses of the townspeople. These houses continue up to the building where I stay. Beyond the building

84. *Lit. trans.*: 3 wa across.

85. The River Elorn.

86. *Ms*: *din-pra-siu*, *lit.* saltpetre, but probably gunpowder here.

87. Important forts were built at the Pointe du Diable and the Pointe des Espagnols. Their batteries controlled both sides of the narrows leading to Brest's harbour.

88. Kosa Pan has mentioned "the cannons at the forts on both banks at the mouth of the estuary" on the occasion of transferring Phra Narai's letter on shore (f. 10).

where I stay is a large ship-building yard where ships are brought in for repairs. Next from the shipyard is a warehouse consisting of a building constructed along the river bank and [FOLIO 32] another constructed crosswise to the east.

Beyond that point, there is an empty area for a distance of about 200 m, then there is a large building. This building is a long row of rooms with balconies connected together in the shape of the letter U and is used to house the sick. Then there is another empty area for another distance of about 120 m, beyond which is situated a fort at the rear of the city.

On the bank, buildings serving as the living quarters of the inhabitants of the city stand in a long row from the fort at the mouth of the estuary to the rear of the warehouse. Next to these houses stands a large building which is a San Paulo church.⁸⁹ Next to the church are several rows of smaller buildings standing close to each other.

According to Monsieur le Commandant du Dépôt, France has six naval bases where the government ships are stationed. Brest is one, and four others are further south towards Portugal and Spain.⁹⁰ One is at the mouth of the river near Le Conquet,⁹¹ and one at the mouth of the river Le Havre.⁹² Two are at the river mouth flowing into the Tuan Sea,⁹³ that is, at the mouth of Le Toulon and Marseilles.⁹⁴ At this particular place, there are forty-four ships equipped with sails and oars. In the direction towards England, there is also a base at Le Havre.

89. The Jesuit church. A revolutionary tribunal was set up there in 1794.

90. There were indeed six ports for the French royal navy: 'four on the Atlantic coast, the "ports du Ponant", the Western or Sunset ports (Dunkirk, Le Havre, Brest, and Rochefort), and two in the Mediterranean, the "ports du Levant", the Eastern or Sunrise ports (Toulon and Marseilles). See note 94.

91. Le Conquet, a small fishing port located 40 km west of Brest on the most westerly point of the Brittany coast.

92. Le Havre is not the name of a river, but an important port city built on the right bank of the estuary of the River Seine.

93. *A very strange Thai name, but it is very likely that the Mediterranean Sea is meant.*

94. *Ms: Mā-ra-wī-sel (Marseilles).* Marseilles was above all a galley port. Kosa Pan is mistaken in taking Toulon as the name of a river. This important Mediterranean naval base lies east of Marseilles, and was the home of the Eastern fleet and its flagship the *Royal Louis*.

As compared with the base at the city of Brest, some of these six bases [FOLIO 33] have about the same number of ships, some more, others less. Some have even larger ships. The total number of ships in these six naval bases is about three hundred. Only four of these are as large as the *Amiral*. There are warehouses and arms and ammunition depots constructed in every base. The average number of officers and crew for each ship, regardless of size, is approximately the same in every base.

In the harbour at Brest, there are as many as thirty merchant marine ships, some belonging to the French, others to the English and the Portuguese. These ships are regularly fastened to the buoys or anchored inside the river, with only four or five leaving or arriving each day.

In the evening, the governor and his wife came and [FOLIO 34] had dinner with me. I took hold of the hand of the governor's wife and we washed our hands together, and I led her to her seat beside me. I sat on her right side; the second ambassador and the third ambassador sat next to her left. I followed the French etiquette as instructed to me by Fr Vachet. After dinner, the governor and his wife said goodbye to me and left.

AT about eight o'clock on Tuesday, the sixth day of the waxing moon of the eighth month,⁹⁵ Monsieur le Commandant du Dépôt, together with two other officers, came to pay me a visit. We had a conversation as befitted the occasion, after which they took leave of me.

In the same day, an officer's wife and seven other ladies from the city of Brest came to pay me a visit. I had conversation with them as befitted the occasion, after which they said goodbye to me and left.

In the same day, [FOLIO 35] the captain of a Dutch ship, his wife and three other ladies came to visit me. I had a talk with them as befitted the occasion, after which they bade me goodbye and left.

In the same day, the two commanders of the forts on each side of the river, accompanied by six officers, came to see me. I had a conversation with them as befitted the occasion, after which they departed.

In the same day, the governor, Monsieur le Commandant du Dépôt, the fort commanders, officers and crew, and city counsellors

95. 25 June 1686.

invited me to go and tour the depots on the west side of the estuary, and to see the wall which was newly constructed.

The first place of our visit was a strong storehouse in which arms and ammunition are kept. It is built of stone, about 36 m long and 12 m wide.⁹⁶ The roof is made of slate slabs similar to our earthenware grooved tiles. The building has four storeys.

The lowest floor is used for the storage of wooden gunsticks which are used to ram down the charge of the cannon, other cannon accessories, mechanical guns, and [FOLIO 36] stand-mounted guns. Platforms are made for matchlocks, flintlocks, horsemen's guns, and guns of other types. Gunpowder holders, swords, lances, straight and curved swords, spears, and halberds are also kept here.

For storage of long barrel firearms, racks with slots and holes are provided where these firearms are stored standing up in twenty-two rows. Of these, two rows are for flintlocks, then another row for cavalry firearms. Next to the walls on all four sides, there are slotted horizontal racks for keeping guns similar to the racks above, but arranged into four sides like a cage. The inner racks within these are used for keeping straight and curved swords. Spears and lances are fastened together into four bundles, and they are kept between rows of these firearms. The straight swords are kept by having the points go into a flat circular centrepiece with the body and hilts radiating out forming a pattern looking like an outspread umbrella. Eleven patterns of this arrangement are then hung up on the ceiling.

The third floor of the building is used as the storage space of muskets and halberds which were once used as weapons by the seamen on the ships. These halberds have flat, wide, and sharp blades on one side, and a long pointed spike on the other side. As to the muskets, they were [FOLIO 37] put up standing in twenty-four rows low to high like a staircase crosswise in the building. Muskets are kept in rows of four, and there are fourteen steps altogether.⁹⁷ The halberds are fastened into bundles and placed next to the four walls.

The fourth floor is used to keep in storage defective kau-ring flintlocks and different pieces of timber for fabrication into musket foregrips and gunstocks, gunsticks, and shafts for spears and lances.

96. *Lit. trans.*: 18 wa long and 6 wa across.

97. *Almost word-for-word translated from the text. The meaning is however unclear.*

These lots of timber are assorted and separately stacked in appropriate piles.

Monsieur l'Intendant informed me that the weapons kept in the depot were sufficient to arm 25,000 men, the actual number of pieces being innumerable.

The building next to the arms and ammunition depot is for storage of anchor cables, ropes, cords, and pulleys for use on ships. These are kept on the lower floor. On the upper floor, canvas and *[fore-and-aft]* stays for ships' use are separately kept for each division and for each ship, with the name of the ship inscribed on slate slabs. The building is square-shaped, 96 m⁹⁸ on each side, and is under one roof.

[FOLIO 38] In front of this row of buildings, from the one for keeping arms and ammunition to the end of the building used for storing ropes and cables, cannons made of brass as well as of iron are kept in rows and groups. The brass cannons are for shots of four, five, six, seven, and eight inches in size, whereas the iron cannons are for shots of four, five, six, and seven inches. Among these are mechanical guns made of brass of several kinds. The cannons and guns are enough for all the ships on active duty. The cannon balls are also kept in front of these buildings.

The building next to the one for storing canvas and ropes is the foundry for casting cannons. On the upper floor of this building, parts and accessories for cannons are kept. The building is about 84 m⁹⁹ long.

Next to the cannon foundry building is another building, about 50 m¹⁰⁰ long, where timber for ship construction and for making parts of ships is stored. The next building, about 26 m¹⁰¹ long, is a factory where young girls spin linen threads for weaving into canvas. In the next building, a weaving factory [FOLIO 39] about 84 m¹⁰² long, men work on looms weaving canvas.

Beyond that canvas factory is the forge building, about 84 m¹⁰³ long, where workmen fabricate the anchors and other metal parts,

98. *Ms: 2 sen 8 wa.*

99. *Ms: 2 sen 2 wa.*

100. *Ms: 1 sen 5 wa.*

101. *Ms: 13 wa.*

102. *Ms: 2 sen 2 wa.*

103. *Ms: 2 sen 2 wa.*

including tanks and trunks for all the ships. In the next building, which is about 46m¹⁰⁴ long, men make sails for the ships. The tools and accessories for making the sails are also kept here. Next to this is another building, about 102 m¹⁰⁵ long, for keeping the newly acquired ships' machines.¹⁰⁶ From this row of buildings is an empty space for a distance of about 100 m,¹⁰⁷ after which are two large buildings where ships' masts are kept. The masts are about as long as the buildings and are stacked in piles lengthwise from the buildings down to the riverside. The buildings themselves are about 35 m long and 21 m wide.¹⁰⁸ The distance from the arms and ammunition buildings to the mast buildings is about 1.6 km.¹⁰⁹

Afterwards, I went over to see the wall at the end of the city. The wall was newly constructed, starting from the corner of the fort at the city end, along the bank of the river but higher up about 107 m¹¹⁰ from the water edge. [FOLIO 40] I walked along the rampart behind the wall up to the eastern city gate. The wall itself is built of stone, about 14 m¹¹¹ high. The moat was about 20 m wide and 6 m deep.¹¹² Inside the wall is a raised embankment about 20 m¹¹³ wide,

104. Ms: 1 sen 3 wa.

105. Ms: 2 sen 11 wa.

106. Ms: *khruang-kam-pan, machinery for the ship*. This must refer to pumps, winches, jacks, and other devices of the same nature for maintaining and loading ships.

107. Ms: 2 sen 10 wa.

108. Ms: 17 wa 2 elbows, 10 wa 2 elbows.

109. Ms: 40 sen. I doubt if there are French descriptions of the naval base at Brest as detailed as those of Kosa Pan. The *ratchathut*, visibly impressed by the extent and organization of the French striking force, is intent on conveying to his king, the only person for whom this text is intended, a precise idea of France's military power, its armaments industry, and naval constructions. It was important that Phra Narai knew that Louis XIV could overawe the Dutch in Asia as in Europe if he wished, or if his ally the King of Siam requested him. The less than conclusive demonstration of the French cannoneers (f. 62) does not seem to have diminished Kosa Pan's enthusiasm too much, even if, in his Asiatic eyes, the Brest marksmen had lost face.

110. Ms: 2 sen 13 wa 2 elbows.

111. Ms: 7 wa.

112. Lit. trans.: 10 wa wide, 3 wa deep.

113. Ms: 10 wa.

on which trees are planted in four rows. The gatehouse is round, constructed in stone, about 4.50 m¹¹⁴ in diameter. There are three doorways stacked from front to rear. Inside the wall there is a guard house on each side of the gate. Then there is a bridge and an opening to cross over the moat. The bridge is of a drawbridge type and [its approaches are] solidly built in stone.

At about dusk I returned to my residence. I have already written about the city wall and the forts.

Actually there are four other warehouses on the west side of the river away from the estuary. One warehouse is for storage of saltpetre. Three other buildings are for keeping ship's biscuit, dried fish, salted meat, wine, vinegar and oil, and provisions for sea-going ships. The depot on the eastern side of the river is a 240-m-long¹¹⁵ building [FOLIO 41] along the riverside, and about 10 m¹¹⁶ wide. It is used for storing the equipment, tools and other accessories for ships. Next to this building, there is another long building, also built along the east riverside, about 400 m long and 8 m¹¹⁷ wide, where men make ropes and cables for use on the ships. The building for the storage of ammunition is built inside four solid walls which were constructed beside the large building next to the riverside.

On the same day at dinnertime, a French lady who claimed to be a relative of Monsieur l'Intendant and the commissioner came to have dinner with me. I gave her due honour in the same way as I did to the governor's wife. After dinner she said goodbye to me and left.

IN the afternoon of Wednesday, the seventh day of the waxing moon of the eighth lunar month,¹¹⁸ three priests who lived on the seashore next to the estuary came to pay me a visit. They said: "We heard that you were in charge of the letter of the sovereign of the Thai kingdom to this country, in order to establish closer friendly relations with [FOLIO 42] the King of France. All us priests are very appreciative of this and wish for continuation and growth of these friendly relations."

"Your Reverend Sirs, I really appreciate your good wishes for the lasting friendship between the sovereigns of our two countries," said I.

114. *Ms: 9 elbows.*

115. *Ms: 5 sen.*

116. *Ms: 5 wa.*

117. *Ms: 4 wa.*

118. 26 June 1686.

"Let me thank you all for this. As a matter of fact, the stability of friendly relations between the two sovereigns should mean a better opportunity for the bishops¹¹⁹ and priests to travel to and from the Orient, to preach your religion to the people there." The priests gave me their blessing and left.

AT about noon on Thursday, the eighth day of the waxing moon on the eighth lunar month,¹²⁰ a priest who was an abbot in a monastery in the city of Brest came with his disciples to pay me a visit.¹²¹ I received them and had a talk with them as befitted the occasion. After that they left.

[FOLIO 43] On that same day, the governor and Monsieur Sāng¹²² the director took me and Fr Vachet on a boat to the old city on the eastern bank of the river. On the way, Fr Vachet informed me that the French squadron leader who was on duty to Cadiz had sent a letter to Monsieur l'Intendant. According to the letter, the King of Spain sent [a message] to inform the squadron leader that he agreed to pay an amount of 500,000 francs for the merchandise confiscated by the authorities in Cadiz, and for the cost of the ship sunk by them. The King of Spain had no desire to settle the matter by a war. In any case, the squadron leader could not collect the reparations at once, as the Spanish king would send a message to the French king first, and he would do as the French king desired. The squadron at that time still blockaded the city of Cadiz. The letter went on to say that one of the Dutch ships dealing with ropes and cables with [FOLIO 44] the ships in the French squadron attempted to send the merchandise to the governor of Cadiz. That ship was therefore arrested by the French squadron.¹²³

119. *Ms: bis-pū, from Port. bispo, bishop.* Three French bishops from the Foreign Missions had resided in Ayutthaya: Pierre Lambert de La Motte, who died there in June 1679, François Pallu, who had been there many times before dying in China in October 1684, and Louis Laneau, consecrated bishop in Ayutthaya in March 1674, who also died there in March 1696.

120. 27 June 1686.

121. This could be Fr Michel Bellanger (see note 12) and the pupils of the Jesuit college.

122. *The Thai text: mū-sū sang.* A person called the "director" and difficult to identify.

123. While visiting the naval fleet anchored in the roads on 24 June, Kosa

When our boat arrived at the quay and we were at the point of going through the city gate, the governor, two of his assistants, fifteen officers and forty officials came out to meet me. When we arrived at the fort, the governor ordered a seven-gun salute for me. After we had arrived inside, the governor took us to see the Arum [Turkish] people who were arrested and kept in custody in that fort.

After going through the first part of the fort, we saw about twenty-seven marines equipped with flintlocks marching to the beating of a drum, with two officers each carrying a lance at the front and the end of the line. We also saw another group of sixteen flintlock-equipped seamen in three rows with four officers each holding a lance standing in front in the middle of the fort. Two drums were used, one in front and one at the rear. The officers gave me a salute with their lance in the French military tradition. The governor told me [FOLIO 45] that the salute by seamen with their lances and drums beating, in the manner which I just saw, was the French way of giving salute to the king and other high-ranking dignitaries. When the salute was given to a man other than the king, the drum beating would be modified to suit the rank of the person. Then, for my information, the governor told the seamen to show me the different ways of drum beating.

After that I was escorted to visit different areas in the fort. That fort is equipped with a number of cannons. There are three brass cannons of a nine-inch calibre, four cannons of seven- and six-inch calibre, and

Pan had noted: "There were thirty-seven ships in the river of Brest altogether, but twenty were on official duty in Cadiz" (f. 30). From 1685 tension mounted between France and Spain over the active participation of French merchants in the trade in gold and silver ingots coming from Peru to Cadiz (see the *Mémoires* of Sourches, Paris, 1882, I, 218–219). At the beginning of 1686, Louis XIV sent a squadron to blockade Cadiz and obliged the Spanish to "remove the new taxes they had levied on all the merchandise from the West Indies, in which trade French merchants were involved to the extent of thirty or forty millions, and forced them not to prevent them from transporting silver and gold from Peru, and to [allow them to] load their goods as they were accustomed" (quoted by E. Lavis, *Louis XIV*, Paris, 1978, II, 236). The Spanish king, Carlos II, Louis XIV's brother-in-law, considered the matter was not worth another Franco-Spanish war. He signed an *asiento* which again permitted French merchants to trade in precious metals, and accepted to reimburse the merchants for the losses they had suffered. Kosa Pan could observe on the spot, in relation to the Turks (see note 22) and the Spanish, the power of the king with whom Phra Narai was seeking an alliance.

ten cannons of five- and four-inch calibre. In addition, there are eleven other cannons, each mounted on a single post or leg. Some are made of brass, the barrels of which are as long as 3 m,¹²⁴ square-shaped at the stock end and round at the muzzle. Of these some are of four-inch calibre and others of three-inch calibre. Again, ten of these are made of iron, of seven-inch and six-inch calibre.

The governor went on to tell me that there was no war or fighting at the estuary at that time, consequently it was practical to keep on hand only a limited number of seamen on duty, just sufficient for the various functions of the fort. There were at that time only 130 seamen on active duty at the eastern fort, and only eighty cannons ready. On the western fort, only fifty seamen were on duty, and there were just enough cannons for the embrasures. [FOLIO 46] The governor further explained that in case of war or other emergency, seamen could be called to report on duty, and arms and ammunition [could be] ready for active service within two or three days.

He also informed me that the fort was built 1800 years before,¹²⁵ and when the new city wall had been completed, the fort could undergo major repair. Within the fort compound, there was a monastery, a building [serving] as the governor's residence, and five buildings [serving] as quarters for the assistants to the governor and other officials. There was also one building for the officers, and another building as the depot for keeping of gunpowder,¹²⁶ arms, and ammunition.

After that I went outside, and they gave me a seven-gun salute. The governor, the assistant to the governor, and other officers came to see me off at the outer wall. I then chose the way back by land and came to my residence on foot. In this way I could have a general view of the building where I stayed and also of the fort.¹²⁷

124. *Lit. trans.*: 6 elbows.

125. The fortification of the roadstead and town of Brest, begun in the early 1670s, was energetically pursued from 1683 under the direction of Marshal de Vauban. The works were still not complete in 1689. Kosa Pan thus visited a very busy worksite. The date of construction ("1,800 years before") of the old fortified castle on the headland overlooking the mouth of the Penfeld in the roads is of course exaggerated. On Roman foundations of the fourth century A.D. a fortress was built between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries.

126. *Ms*: *din-pha-siu*, *lit.* *salpêtre*. See note 86.

127. *The meaning of the Thai passage is not clear. The text says: "I walked on land to see the building where I stayed. And there was a picture of the fort."*

On both sides of the road which I took, I could see innumerable shops which offered for sale all sorts of merchandise, such as woollen fabrics, Pastu fabrics, dresses, hats, mirrors on stands, combs, scissors, dinnerware, glassware, bronzeware, brassware, [FOLIO 47] bread, wine, various kinds of fruit, beef, mutton, vegetables, fish, and all kinds of odds and ends.

ON Friday, the ninth day of the waxing moon of the eighth month, the year of the Tiger and the eighth year of the Chunlasakkarat decade,¹²⁸ Monsieur Āl-put,¹²⁹ who was the depot chief responsible for supplying the provisions to the ships in all six estuaries, came to see me and took me to observe how the provisions store was arranged in three buildings and in the fort on the west bank. The governor and Monsieur l'Intendant, a senior ship captain, and le Messire the senior [doctor] came along with us in the boat. When we arrived at the landing platform, eight sailors who were on guard at the warehouse came down to receive me at the landing. I went up to the bakery building and saw about forty men working. Some were grinding, some were kneading, and some were baking. All these workers wore a cap made of leaves. They raised a cheer for me three times. Monsieur Āl-put explained to me that in France they would give cheer only when they were very pleased with the guest. When we arrived at the middle building [FOLIO 48] where they had prepared dinner for us, the men again raised three cheers.

We went to look around the fort at the river mouth. The fort has fifteen embrasures, five brass cannons, and nine iron cannons. On the bank, there are groups of iron cannons mounted level on the ground, with six or five or four cannons in each group. The calibre of these cannons ranges from five-inch or six-inch to seven-inch. A large number of cannon balls are kept in piles in the fort. There is one building on the bank there, about 40 m¹³⁰ in length, with a wall around on all four sides, and flanked with two towers. One could see a guard holding a lance on duty on each tower.

On the bank next to the fort inside the estuary, there are three warehouses. These three buildings are of the same size, being about

128. 28 June 1686.

129. *Spelt differently in f. 51: Vāl-put.*

130. *Ms: 20 wa.*

70 m long and 12 m wide.¹³¹ These buildings have three storeys each. The lower floor of the building next to the river mouth is used for storage of wine, and containers of salad oil stacked on top of each other. The middle floor is used to keep wheat, oats, and other cereals. The upper floor [FOLIO 49] is used to keep bags for personal use of individual seamen to keep their food.

The lower floor of the middle building is used for storage of beef and pork and salted ham put in bags and set next to each other. The middle floor is used for keeping corn and oats and various kinds of peas. On the upper floor, wheat, oats, and hay as feed for sheep and pigs are kept [.....*illegible*.....].

They make bread at each end of the building, the area in the middle being used as the living quarters by the chief in charge of the building. The middle floor is for keeping bread which has been baked. The upper floor is for keeping flour and for sifting oatmeal and wheat flour. They have a chute built from this floor down to the lower two floors. When flour is required on the lower levels, the men on the top floor will feed into the chute as much flour as is needed below.

At the sides and in front of the buildings, we noticed that stones were piled up there in large heaps.

One of the French gentlemen asked me for my opinion on what I had seen around in the depot. I gave him my answer as follows: "All three warehouses are very orderly and well arranged. The management is excellent overall and they are worthy of His Majesty the King of France."

[FOLIO 50] The gentleman explained to me further that despite all the extensive preparations, it was sometimes found hardly adequate when an emergency arose. I said: "A ship is manned by quite a large number of sailors; it is therefore necessary to make such an extensive preparation. This is a regular practice which is observed in every big city in any country, both for the army and the navy."

After that they took me to dinner on the lower floor of the middle building. The three walls of the dining hall were all covered with green foliage. Every pillar was decorated with vines and branches of trees and flowers. On the ceiling was hung a canopy also decorated with foliage and flowers. The floor was covered with [.....*illegible*.....].

131. *Lit. trans.*: 35 wa long and 6 wa wide.

Those who were present at dinner with me were as follows: the governor, Monsieur l'Intendant, Monsieur Āl-put the depot chief, a senior ship captain, le Messire the senior doctor, the captain of the flagship [FOLIO 51] which carried the royal letter, and Fr Vachet.

Three kinds of soup were served first, after which came fried fish, roasted fish, and other dishes totalling nine varieties. After that came another kind of fish which looked similar to our pla-sa-phong but with reddish meat. The French called this kind of fish so-mung (saumon; salmon), and liked it more than other kinds. In addition to the salmon, they brought in a tray of fresh salad, a tray of pan-fried vegetables, two trays of different kinds of fruit in syrup, and a tray of candied fruit, totalling five trays.

There were other desserts also, one made of cornflour mixed with egg and sugar, then two kinds of cream, one fresh and another with brown sugar added, then two kinds of sweets in the form of flowers. These flowers are made of sugar, one kind white and another kind red.

After eating, a bowl of perfumed water was brought in for washing hands. After washing our hands, we used the remaining perfumed water to sprinkle on each other.

Monsieur Vāl-put apologetically said to me: "We feel that the dinner we prepared for you today [FOLIO 52] was not as good as we thought would be worthy of you. We wish we could have prepared something better to please you. But under the circumstances, this was all we could do. If there was anything lacking or inappropriate, please be kind enough to forgive us."¹³²

"What you have done is excellent and very pleasant," said I. "The atmosphere was beautiful and lovely, and we felt as if we were eating in a garden of fresh and fragrant flowers, and we felt very much at home indeed. Let me take this opportunity to assure you of my personal appreciation of what you have done for me and your kindness and friendliness towards me."

After the dinner, we left. The men raised three cheers, and those gentlemen accompanied me to my residence. It should be noted here too that there were many onlookers, both men and women, who came to watch us when we were at dinner.

132. The visit to the warehouse took place on a Friday, and on Fridays meat was not allowed to Catholics. hence the depot chief's excuses.

IN the morning on Saturday, the tenth day of the waxing moon of the eighth month,¹³³ Fr Vachet informed me that a courier with an express message from Paris had just arrived. [FOLIO 53] The French ambassador [Chaumont] had arrived in Paris, and the French king sent the instruction to Monsieur l'Intendant to direct the ship, the carrier of the letter from the King of Siam, together with the envoys and all the officers on board, to Le Havre, a port facing England, about eighty leagues away from Brest. Fr Vachet intended to have the royal letter transferred from the building to the ship on the following day.

In the afternoon of the same day, however, Fr Vachet came to see me again, but this time informing me that another courier from Paris had just arrived with another instruction from the king to Monsieur l'Intendant to have the letter, the envoys, and all other officials travel by land from Brest to Paris directly, instead of going via Le Havre. The instruction specified that the gifts and other paraphernalia accompanying the letter should be shipped on a sloop and taken to [FOLIO 54] Le Havre and then sent to Paris by another boat.¹³⁴

According to this latest instruction, the king appointed Monsieur Tro,¹³⁵ the king's chamberlain, and Monsieur Silly,¹³⁶ who was the

133. 29 June 1686.

134. As soon as the French court learnt of the arrival of the Siamese ambassadors at Brest, their voyage to Paris was arranged. Chaumont, who had taken post-horses to go to the court as soon as he could, sent in haste a memorandum which suggested: "The king's carriages could be sent to Brest for the ambassadors, and in all the towns through which they would pass, grant them the same honours as I received, complimenting them each day at the places where they would dine and sup . . . One should also fire the cannons in the towns which have them, and when they arrive in Paris, give them a very fine formal entrance, for it would have been impossible to have a better one than that I was granted" (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, NAF 9380, f.197). The considerable volume of luggage and bales of presents led to the decision to send them on a frigate from Brest via Le Havre to Rouen, where they would be loaded onto barges and go up the River Seine to Paris. Phra Narai's letter, the ambassadors and their retinue would travel in carriages. As there was plenty of time and it was desired to show the Siamese the country, it was decided that the shortest route through Rennes, Le Mans and Chartres would not be taken, but they would go down to Nantes, and go up the Loire to Orléans, from where they would reach Paris via Fontainebleau. See the map of their itinerary on p. xii.

135. *Lit. trans.*: *mū-sū tro*, a very close attendant in the king's chamber.

136. *Lit. trans.*: *mū-sū si-li*, who was accustomed to make arrangements to receive the country's guests.

protocol chief, as the officials in charge of the reception of the letter and escorting the envoys by land from Brest.¹³⁷ These two gentlemen had been on the way from Paris to Brest for four days already, but the courier who carried the message managed to arrive here before they did, because the courier came on horseback nonstop day and night.

The king also gave the instruction that every city where the royal letter and the envoys passed by should give due honour by gun salutes and appropriate receptions. Under no circumstances should the envoys be offended. The reception and the departure of the envoys had to be strictly observed in one city after another until they arrived in Paris.

The instruction emphasized that when the official company of the Thai envoys arrived in a city, [FOLIO 55] the governor of that city had to order a gun salute in honour of the royal letter and the ambassador in conformity with the convention of that city. If it happened that the city never gave any gun salute to princes and high-ranking dignitaries before, then it had to be regarded that this was a special case which the king specifically ordered. This was because the French king had great consideration for the King of Siam. The instruction even made it clear that any city which ignored this special instruction would incur the displeasure of the king and would be subject to penalties.

Later on the same day, the governor brought Monsieur Lam-mok [La Mothe?], the chief naval inspector of the city, to see me. Monsieur Lam-mok said to me: "I have been conducting an inspection tour of the naval establishments and was in a city about twenty-two leagues away from Brest when I heard of the arrival of the royal letter of the King of Ayutthaya and his ambassador at this city. I am very happy to learn about it and have therefore come here to meet you." [I replied:] "I am really happy to hear that you are pleased about the bond of friendship between the two kings. [FOLIO 56] Personally I am very happy to meet you."

Then the governor, Monsieur l'Intendant and Fr Vacher asked me to go and visit another depot on the east side of the bank at the

137. A gentleman ordinary of the king's household, Mr Storff of Torf (both spellings are found) and Mr de Silly, in charge of protocol, arrived at the beginning of July in Brest to present the king's compliments to the ambassadors, accompany them while they were in the kingdom, and give them all the honours due to them.

mouth of the river, and to visit the garden at the San Paulo monastery. Monsieur Lam-mok came along with us.

At the fort, the warehouse stands alongside the bank for a distance of 240 m and is about 10 m wide.¹³⁸ The building has three storeys. The ground floor is for storage of cables, ropes, pulleys made of iron and of copper and of wood, bells, gunpowder and containers for individual seamen, lanterns with iron windshields and with windshields made of goat's horn, and other iron tools for use on ships. These are kept in sections each separated by iron railings. Pots and pans for cooking food for the seamen on ships are also kept on this floor.

There are two rooms on the middle floor. One of the rooms is used to keep bars of iron, and large and small nails. These are kept in sections separate from each other. [FOLIO 57] In another room, they store canvas, canvas needles, loom reeds, hanging lamps, small and large candles, small and large flagpoles for the stern of the ships, and capstans. The top floor is used for keeping canvas fabric. The space is also used for the making of sails.

In front of the warehouse, next to the water's edge, there is a storage space for cannon balls. The space is surrounded by walls on four sides, 10 m long and 6 to 8 m wide.¹³⁹ There is a two-storeyed building from the walled space stretching to the east about 400 m long and 8 wide.¹⁴⁰ At the end of this stretch the building turns in the direction of the water for about 20 m¹⁴¹ until it reaches the fibre strands for making into ropes. These strands when made into rope can be as long as 400 m.¹⁴² Monsieur l'Intendant informed me that on the upper floor they stored linen flax for making into canvas.

There are two more buildings behind this building, one for storing caulking resins and caulking oils, the other for making ropes from the ready-made strands. In front of the building the sailors are making large anchor cables.¹⁴³

138. *Lit. trans.*: 6 sen along the water and 5 wa beam.

139. *Lit. trans.*: 5 wa long and 3 and 4 wa wide.

140. *Lit. trans.*: 10 sen long and 4 wa wide.

141. *Lit. trans.*: 10 wa long.

142. *Lit. trans.*: 10 sen long.

143. This is Vachet's account: "Until information was received from the court, the intendant, always concerned to occupy the ambassadors, proposed each day new distractions to them. Sometimes they visited the finest ships,

After leaving the fort, we proceeded to visit the San Paulo [Jesuit] monastery, and went into the garden. Carpets were laid and many flowers gathered and put on the carpet. On the wall on both sides [FOLIO 58] they hung up tapestries with angular designs. On the ceiling they put up a canopy using a carpet with patterns like our phanom-pha-kuat designs.

This monastery is surrounded by a wall, about 80 m in width and 120 m in length.¹⁴⁴ It contains a small orchard, a flower garden, and a vegetable garden where they grow plants like turnips and salad. There is a hexagonal summerhouse in the middle of the garden. After walking around the garden, the priest¹⁴⁵ invited the three of us and the gentleman whom I mentioned before to go inside the summerhouse and take a seat there. The priest then ordered the attendants who were waiting to bring in fruit and sweets that were put in small dishes, and vegetables and milk, all in three trays, for us and Mr Lam-mok.

The priest then said to me: "I am grateful that you have come to see me and visit my monastery. Actually, I intended to invite you here yesterday, but the unpredictable rain made it inconvenient. Even today, it happens to be a Saturday; the arrangement made for your reception was therefore inadequate. For this I ask for your forgiveness. If it were not a Saturday, the reception should be better."

"Reverend Sir, the arrangements you have made for the dinner and my reception are far more than adequate. As a priest, you have done beautifully. The food was really superb, well done and tasteful. From the atmosphere of the meeting, with varieties of colourful flowers all around, down to the comfort of the seats, everything [FOLIO 59] is blameless. In a word, everything is just magnificent."

sometimes they inspected the ropes. One day would be the drill of the cannoneers, another day to watch the cannons and bombs being cast. The skill of the rope-makers was not that which they least appreciated. They saw a rope of 150 fathoms and ten inches in diameter paid out in three hours. The stores occupied them one whole day. As much time was needed for the arsenal. They found the machines for cleaning the well decks admirable. The ease with which vessels were careened surprised them, but what appeared to them most astonishing was the prodigious number of workmen occupied in just one French port." Quoted in A. Launay, *op.cit.*, I, 181.

144. *Lit. trans.*: 2 sen wide and 3 sen long.

145. *Ms.*: "Padre San Paulo". Doubtless the Jesuit Michel Bellanger mentioned in notes 12 and 121.

After that dinner, I bade goodbye. The priest came with me to send me off at the door of the building. I said to him there: "Reverend Sir, you do not have to go further, this is far enough." – "I appreciate your coming to visit us. I am going to accompany you to your residence," said the priest. "You have come far enough. Please do not trouble yourself to go further. Please return to your place," said I. "May God bless you and give you health and strength to work further in this beautiful country according to the will of God."

In any case, the priest came with me to see me off to a distance of about 200 m¹⁴⁶ away from the monastery before I succeeded in persuading him to return. I then came back to the building where I stayed.

ON Sunday, the eleventh day of the waxing moon of the eighth month,¹⁴⁷ the priest of the San Paulo monastery came to see me and said: "I feel very much obliged that you went to see me at the monastery. It is such an honour that will be remembered forever in this country. I am really thankful for it." I said to him: "A priest from this San Paulo monastery who went to Ayutthaya¹⁴⁸ talked very highly about you and told me very much about you. I am very honoured indeed to have the opportunity to know you in person."

At noon, I invited him to join us for lunch. [FOLIO 60] Besides us two, those who were at lunch that day included the governor, Monsieur l'Intendant, Fr Vachet, and four ships' captains.

After lunch, two priests who lived three leagues away from Brest came to greet me. I spent some time with them as befitted the occasion. In the same day, two ladies who claimed to be the sisters of the Jesuit Father who went to the Thai lands,¹⁴⁹ and seven ladies who were officers' wives, came to see me. I met them and talked to them as befitted the occasion until they took leave of me.

In the evening, Monsieur l'Intendant sent a French gentleman to see me. He told me that he came to Brest carrying a message to

146. *Lit. trans.*: 5 sen far from the monastery.

147. 30 June 1686.

148. Fr Tachard had dashed off to Versailles to start his intrigues. Fr Bellanger no doubt followed his instructions to wean the Siamese ambassadors as much as possible from the influence of the Foreign Missions.

149. This refers to Guy Tachard. See the end of note 12.

Monsieur l'Intendant from the commissioner of the province. He himself was an official working for the commissioner.

He informed me further that the commissioner of the province received an instruction from Paris that the governor and the counsellors of any city in the province had to give a formal reception to the Thai envoys and their company when they passed through that city. If the city was in need of anything, it should be reported to the provincial authority at once and acquisition made accordingly. [FOLIO 61] As the governors of the cities in the province had no idea how many people were in the company of the Thai envoys, Monsieur l'Intendant was to supply the necessary information.

Fr Vachet and I expressed our appreciation of the concern of the provincial authorities for the Thai envoys.

ON Monday, the twelfth day of the waxing moon of the eighth lunar month,¹⁵⁰ two officers living two leagues away from Brest came to welcome me. I talked to them as befitted the occasion until they said goodbye and left.

At about nine o'clock in the morning of the same day, Fr Vachet informed me about the letter from the Marquis de Seignelay to Monsieur l'Intendant of the city of Brest. The marquis heard that the Thai envoys intended to travel by land to Paris together with the pavilion containing the royal letter, and was of the opinion that it would be extremely difficult to do so. The marquis therefore would like Monsieur l'Intendant to explain to the Thai ambassador that such a land journey would be very difficult to make in France. What would have to be done would be to have the pavilion and other gifts taken to Le Havre, and from there shipped to Paris by boat instead. The royal letter could be carried by the ambassador himself. With this arrangement, the pavilion should have arrived in Paris by [FOLIO 62] the time the ambassador's party would [have reached there].¹⁵¹ The letter could then be easily installed in the pavilion at the time of its presentation to the King of France, if it was so desired by the Thai ambassador.

Since the king had suggested it that way, I asked Fr Vachet for his views concerning what would be the best course to follow. Fr Vachet

150. 1 July 1686.

151. See note 133.

voiced his opinion that the best way would be to conform to the king's suggestion, as the journey from Brest to Paris was not very convenient. To put the pavilion in a carriage was not practical, and to have it carried by men for such a long distance was an impossibility.

ON Tuesday, the thirteenth day of the waxing moon of the eighth month,¹⁵² five French ladies and six officers came to visit me. I had a conversation with them and spent some time with them as befitted the occasion until they said goodbye to me and left.

In the same day, Monsieur l'Intendant and Fr Vachet took me to see the naval exercise of cannon-firing practice by an artillery corps of the naval force at the fort. The captain of the ship [the *Oiseau*], many officers, and many seamen went along with us to see the exercise. The six brass cannons of five-inch calibre for the exercise were all mounted on the fort. The target was about 320 m¹⁵³ away. Of the thirty-seven rounds fired, only one fell inside the target circle. All others missed the mark, some to the left, some to the right, some beyond and some short of the circle. [FOLIO 63] I gave five *francs* to the seaman who fired the [successful] shot.

On the same day, an officer and the assistant to the governor of the province of Brittany,¹⁵⁴ who lived about two-days' journey away from Brest, came to see us. This governor, whose name was Monsieur le Grand Pouvoir,¹⁵⁵ was an official who had been authorized by the king to exercise unlimited power within his province, to the point that he could pass the death sentence on a man who was indicted for murder or oppression of the public, if the indictment was proved true in court.

The assistant to the governor said to me: "The governor of the province was summoned by the king. He sent me to see you and inform you that he received an official instruction from Paris that a

152. 2 July 1686.

153. *Ms*: 8 *sen*.

154. *Ms*: *pra-ving-sia de pra-bo-ra-tân*. The governor of the province of Brittany from 1670 was Charles d'Albert d'Ailly, Duke of Chaulnes, based in Rennes, the capital of the province located 220 km from Brest. The duke was at Versailles at the time.

155. *Ms*: *mū-sū grang-po-wo*, *Monsieur le Grand Pouvoir* (the gentleman with all power). Kosa Pan mistakes here an attribute for a proper name. The power of governors of provinces was indeed almost unlimited.

reception be held in your honour [.....*illegible*.....] sent me here to find out when you would start on your journey."

I said to him: "I really appreciate hearing that you are happy about the friendly relations between our king and your king. Let me sincerely thank you for this. With respect to my journey to Paris, I am still waiting for the commissioner to come to see me. When the commissioner starts on the journey to Paris, I [FOLIO 64] shall go with him. If you two intend to go to Paris, I would be very happy to have you both go along with me at the same time."¹⁵⁶

ON Wednesday, the fourteenth day of the waxing moon of the eighth month,¹⁵⁷ Fr Sang Beñ-to¹⁵⁸ and Monsieur le Magistrat who was in the administrative work at Brest, and an officer who lived twenty-four leagues away from Brest, came to see me. I had a conversation with them as befitted the occasion.

On that same day, the wife of an officer who lived two leagues away from Brest came to greet me. I had a conversation with her as befitted the occasion.

ON Thursday, the fifteenth day of the waxing moon of the eighth month,¹⁵⁹ three ladies and two gentlemen from a town twelve leagues away from Brest came to greet me. I had a conversation with them as befitted the occasion. After that they left.

On the same day [FOLIO 65] [.....] and the captain took me to see the structure made for the installation of the masts on a ship. The ship which would have the masts installed had forty-six cannons

156. *The Ms. has in this order: "On that same day . . . / M. le Grand Pouvoir, the governor, has absolute authority to pass the death sentence . . . / An officer and an assistant come to see the envoy. / Paris sent instructions for the reception of the Thai envoy. The two men want to know when the envoy will start on the journey. / The envoy thanks the two men for appreciating Franco-Thai friendship. / The envoy is waiting for the commissioner, and invites the two gentlemen to go to Paris at the same time." / In the actual translation, the order is changed. The translator is not sure that it was what the ambassador intended, but it seems to make the best sense and agrees well with the context.*

157. 3 July 1686.

158. No doubt a Benedictine monk, a member of the order of St Benedict (OSB).

159. 4 July 1686.

mounted on board and was 33.85 m long and 10.25 m wide.¹⁶⁰ The large mast was 26.25 m¹⁶¹ long, and the front mast was 23.95 m¹⁶² long.

The ship was moored next to the pedestal. The pedestal was constructed of stone from the river bottom up and served as the base. On the pedestal there were three large beams leaning outward with a lever on each beam. The levers were first pulled in to pick up and lift the large mast. There were three pulleys fastened to the end of these beams. Ropes were inserted into the tracks on the pulleys and let down to hook up the large mast in two places, using the hooks at the end of these ropes. Two of the beams were then cranked up. In installing the front mast, only one beam was used.

In addition, any part of the river at Brest which was not deep enough had to be dredged. The dredger was constructed [FOLIO 66] look similar to our *rua-i-pet*,¹⁶³ about 12 m long and 6 m wide.¹⁶⁴ In the middle of the deck was a pedestal with a wooden lever mounted. At the end of the lever was attached a wooden arm bending downward. Two levers shaped like spoon handles were fixed on each side at the end of this arm. To each handle was fixed an iron bucket shaped like half a cradle. In between the two buckets there was a shaft with a three-threaded spiral screw. The whole unit could be made to go down to the bottom of the river, with the screw turning, digging, and drawing up soil and mud. The buckets were made to close in and at the turn of the screw, the soil was drawn upward and discharged into a boat which looked like our *sam-pan*.¹⁶⁵

The mechanism for lifting up the masts, as well as that for digging soil, have now been described.

On the same day, Monsieur l'Abbé de Saint-Martin,¹⁶⁶ and three French ladies who lived two leagues away from Brest, came to see me.

160. Ms: 16 wa 3 sok 1 khuep 4 niu, and 5 wa 1 khuep.

161. Ms: 13 wa 1 khuep.

162. Ms: 13 wa 3 sok 1 khuep 8 nui.

163. Ms: *rua-i-pet*: a kind of long cargo boat.

164. Lit. trans.: 6 wa long and 3 wa wide.

165. A kind of small river boat.

166. This Abbé de Saint-Martin could be Michel de Saint-Martin, an eccentric professor emeritus at the University of Caen, some 300 km east of Brest. During the 1684-1685 Siamese embassy to France, Saint-Martin had been the good-natured victim of some of his students, who, disguised as Siamese

I had a conversation with them as befitted the occasion. Fr Vachet told me that this Monsieur l'Abbé was a nobleman whom [FOLIO 67] all the people in the province of Brittany held in very high respect.

On that day, four ladies from the town came to see me. I had a conversation with them as befitted the occasion. Then they left.

On the same day, the governor brought Fr Lac-ā-lac-ā-bāk,¹⁶⁷ who lived five leagues away from Brest, to see me. I had a conversation with him as befitted the occasion. Then he left.

and claiming to carry a patent of nobility from the King of Siam, extorted from him a copious meal at the best inn in town (see my *Siam and the West*, chapter 14, "A Student Farce"). Perhaps Saint-Martin for once wanted to see real Siamese envoys.

167. Ms: *lac-ā-lac-ā-bak*. Unidentifiable.

APPENDIX ON THE THAI CALENDAR

THE Thai lunar calendar is adapted from an Indian system. A Thai lunar year has twelve months, simply named 1st, 2nd . . . to 12th. The first month falls mostly in December, sometimes late November or early January. An odd-number month has 29 days, an even-number month 30 days. There are seven intercalary months in 19 years (like the Metonic cycle of 19 years). The intercalary month has 30 days and is added as the *second* eighth lunar month after the regular eighth month of the year.

A month begins with the day *following* the new moon. That day is numbered the first day *of the waxing moon*, then the second day *of the waxing moon*, the third . . . to the fifteenth day *of the waxing moon*, which is the full moon day. The numbering after that is not the sixteenth, seventeenth . . . , but the first day *of the waning moon*, then the second, third, fourth . . . to the fourteenth or fifteenth day *of the waning moon*, which is the new moon day, the last day of the month. After that a new month starts.

Even with the intercalation, the average length of a lunar year does not correspond exactly to that of the solar or tropical year. With another complicated compensation when one day is added to the seventh month every three to seven years, the resulting *average* length of a Thai luni-solar year is still 12 minutes 36 seconds longer than a Julian calendar year. At present the computation for the interval of years when this compensatory day is to be added is still unsettled, so any attempt to convert a Thai lunar date into a Julian (or Gregorian) calendar date is at the best liable to one-day error. In any case, ready-made charts for direct comparison of the lunar date of the Thai luni-solar year with the solar calendar date are very useful.¹

1. The Chinese cycle of years in Thai inscriptions computed by Roger Billard in *BEFEO* (1963) is for practical purposes the Thai calendar years. The most

In denoting the year, two nominations are used. One is the assignment of twelve animal names to the year, namely the year of the Rat, Bull, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog, and Pig—a cycle of twelve years. To this animal name one adds the *last* figure (using Pāli term only) of the Chunlasakkarat year. This year can be easily computed by subtracting 638 from A.D. Although a Chunlasakkarat year is a solar calendar year, it begins *now* on the fifteenth or sixteenth of April.

Kosa Pan began writing his diary on the first day after his arrival at Brest. The first day mentioned in his diary is Thursday, the first day of the waxing moon of the eighth lunar month (the year of the Tiger), and the eighth year of the Chunlasakkarat Decade, which corresponds to 20 June 1686 (Buddhist Era 2229; Chunlasakkarat 1048).

The Chunlasakkarat year is sometimes given at the beginning of a record, or of a section of a chronicle, to make identification of the date complete.

The lunar calendar is still in use in Buddhist circles in Thailand. The Buddha's birthday, the beginning day and the last day of rainy season retreat (Lent), etc., are all computed and given in the lunar calendar fashion, then converted to the official solar calendar for the public which is more familiar with the solar calendar, the official calendar used in Thailand nowadays.

V. B.

recent work is J. C. Eade's *South East Asian Ephemeris* published by Cornell University (1989).

THE DIARY OF KOSA PAN

(Ok-phra Wisut Sunthon)

Thai Ambassador to France, June–July 1686

This account from Kosa Pan's journal describes in great detail the arrival in Brest in 1686 of the first full Siamese embassy to reach France. The author is the first ambassador of that embassy, also known as the *rachathut* Ok-phra Wisut Sunthon, who became *phra khlung* in 1688 under King Phetracha after the death of King Narai. This fragment is apparently all that survives of a massive report of the activities of the embassy written for King Narai. It was accidentally discovered in Paris in the early 1980s, was published in Thai in 1984, and appears here in English for the first time.


The original translation by Professor Visudh Busayakul has been edited by Professors Dirk Van der Cruysse and Michael Smithies and given extensive explanatory notes.

DIRK VAN DER CRUYSSSE, of the Royal Academy of Belgium, is Full Professor at the University of Antwerp, where he teaches the history of French culture and French literature. He is best known in Southeast Asia for his *Louis XIV et le Siam*, now published in English as *Siam and the West, 1500–1700*.

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SILKWORM BOOKS

DIARY OF KOSA PAN THE THAI AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE JUNE-JULY 1686
Bht 325.- Nett
ISBN 9-7475-5158-6



9789747551587
THAILAND H-10300 ASIAN HISTORY
Imported By Asia Books Co. Ltd. 01002